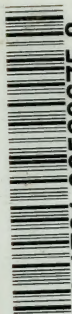
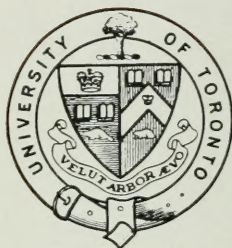


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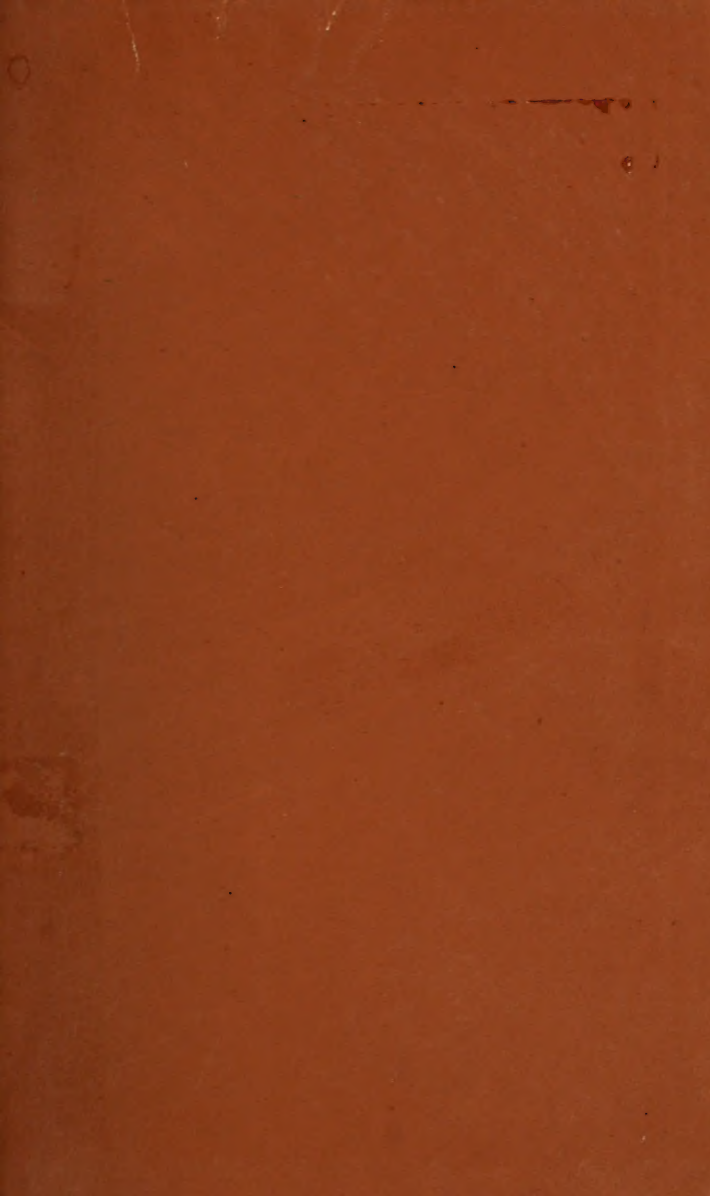
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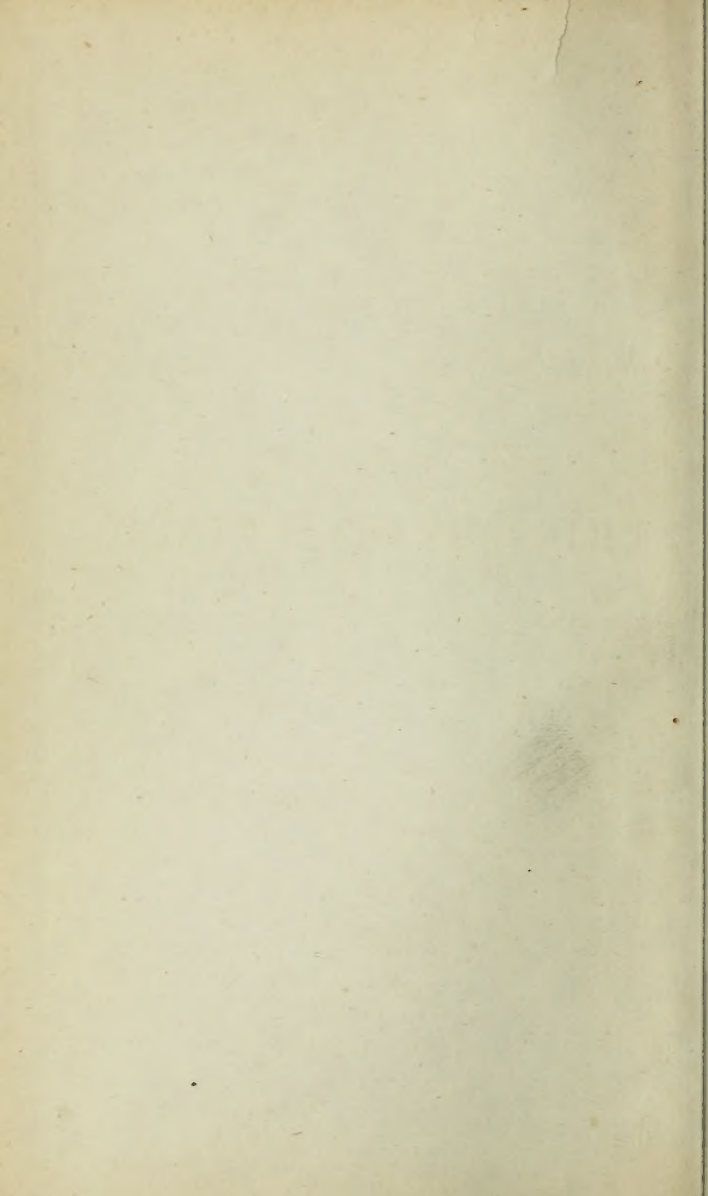
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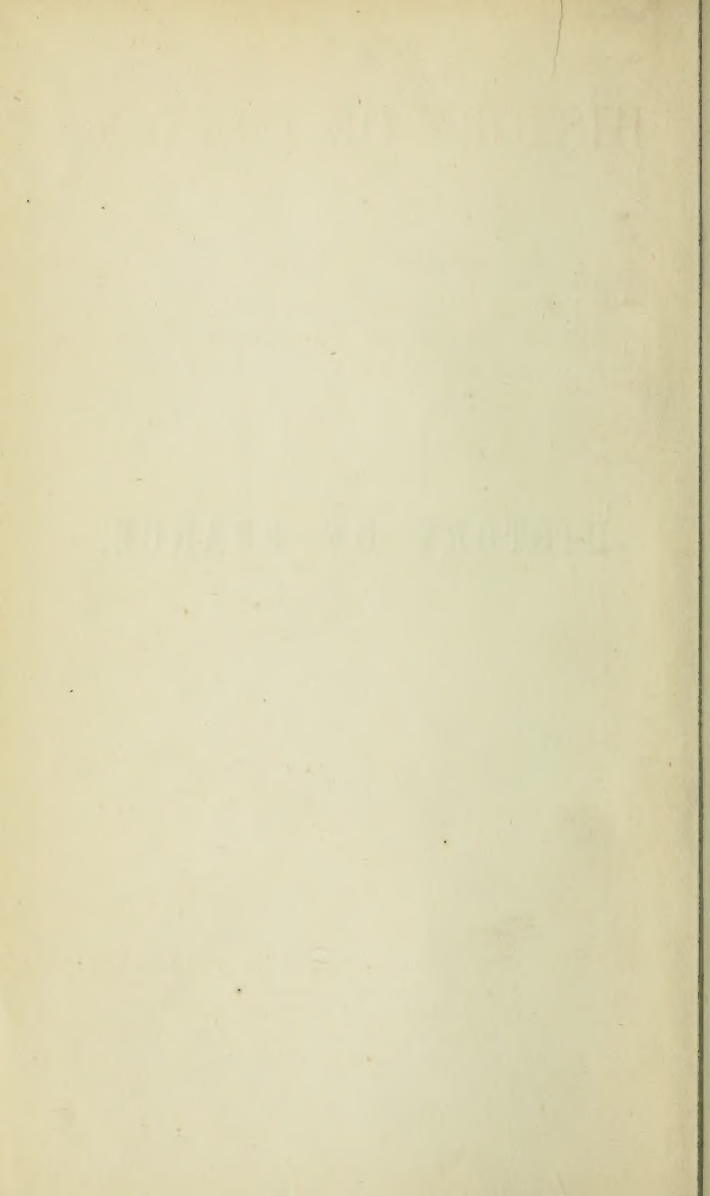
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HISTORY OF FRANCE.



# HISTORY OF FRANCE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH HISTORY," ETC.

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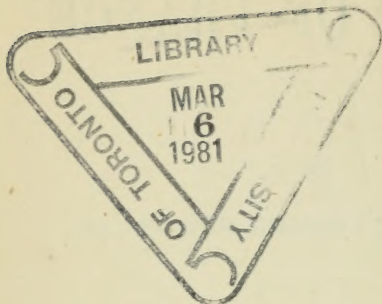
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## PREFACE.

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THE History of France which is here offered to the reader, is designed to occupy a middle place between the brief compendiums compiled for the use of the schoolroom, and the large and important works in which the Annals of France are related with great amplitude of detail, and in a style adapted for readers who can devote much time to historical studies.

It has been the especial aim of the writer of these volumes to convey as much information concerning the social condition of the people, and their judicial and political institutions, as the size and scope of the work would permit : and it is hoped that this has been done accurately, as well as in a manner sufficiently readable to engage the attention of young people who are just entering on the study of Modern History, and also to furnish readers of superior years and knowledge with a handbook which may prove acceptable, when reference to works of greater bulk and erudition would be inconvenient.

The author has derived great assistance from Sir James Stephen's "Lectures on the History of France ;" and from the Rev. E. Smedley's "History of the Reformed



Religion in France." Several interesting particulars are taken from the Rev. J. H. Gurney's "Chapters on French History." Much information has been derived from the works of Thierry, De Tocqueville, Michelet, Sismondi, Lamartine, and several other French writers : and some quotations are made from Sir W. Scott, Keightley, Sir Jas. Mackintosh, and others.

In a few cases, where long and important quotations occur, reference has been made to the authors quoted at the foot of the page. But in the majority of cases, it is judged better to make this general statement of the sources whence information has been derived, than to encumber the pages of so small a work with perpetual references to authorities for the facts or opinions adduced in it.

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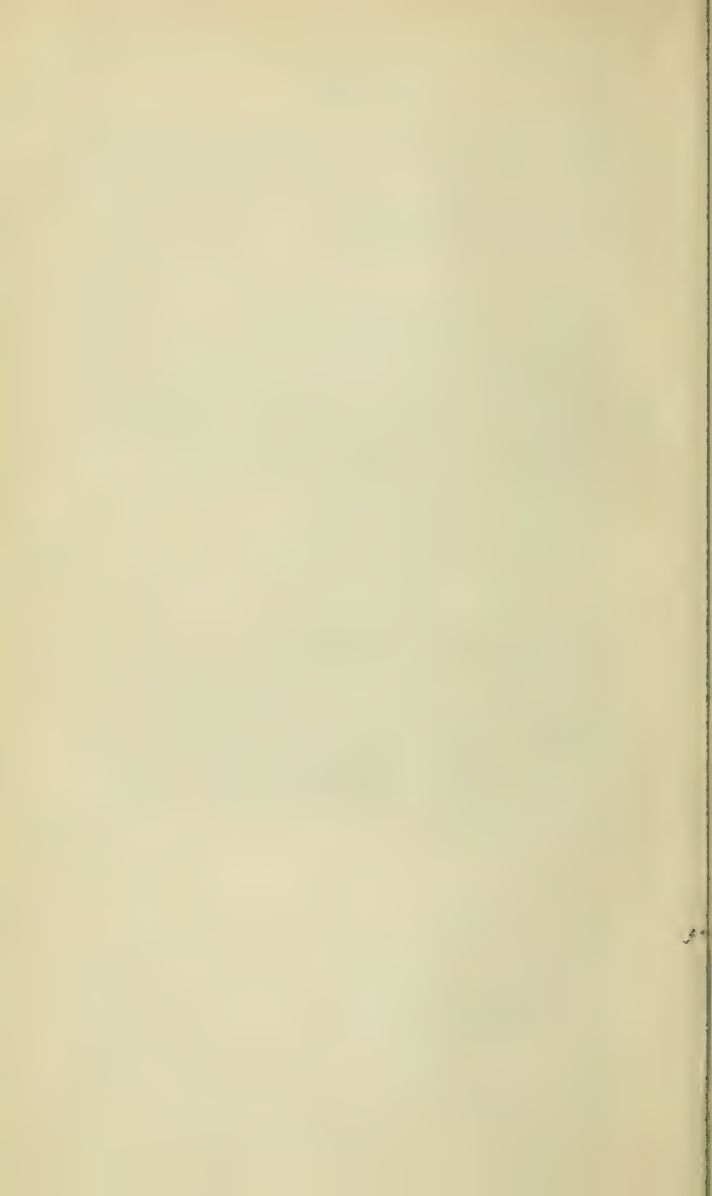
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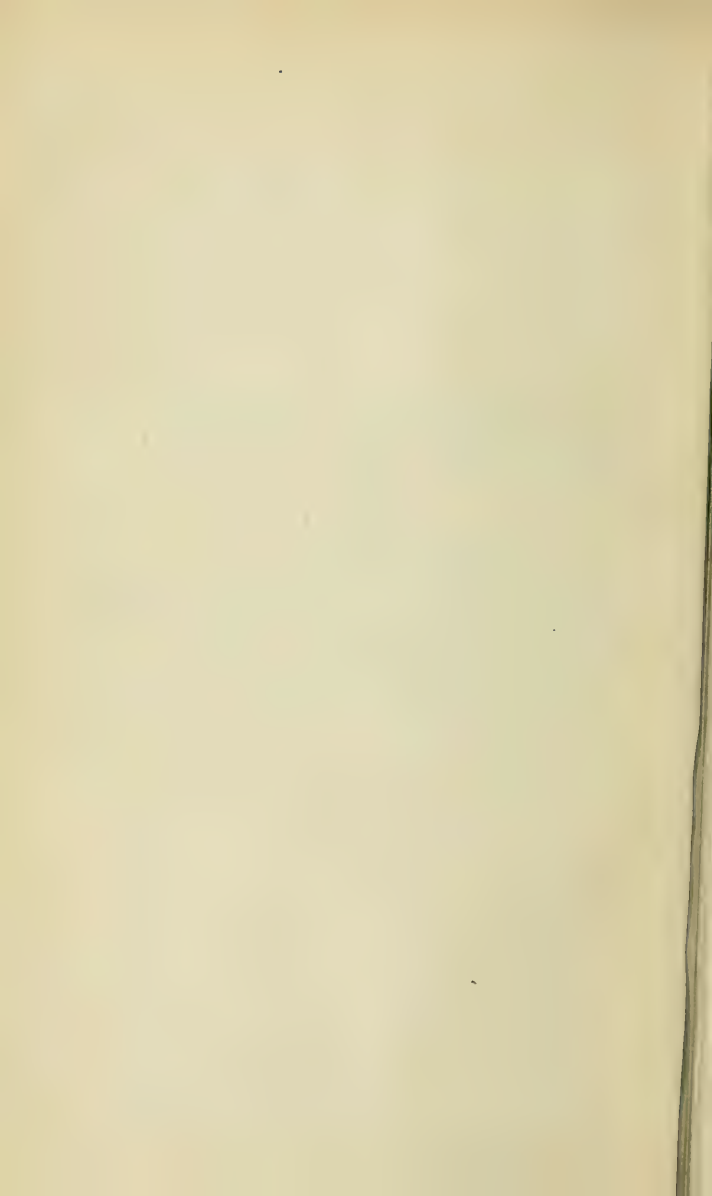
# HISTORY OF FRANCE.



## PART FIRST.

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE FALL OF  
THE CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTY.

FROM 600 B.C. TO 987 A.D.





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Gaul: its Ancient Inhabitants; their Character and Migrations.—Cisalpine Gaul.—The Gauls attack Rome.—They take part in the Punic Wars.—Rome conquers Cisalpine Gaul.—The Romans in Transalpine Gaul.—Greek Settlements.—First Roman Settlement in Gaul.—*Gallia Narbonensis*.—Conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar.

FROM 600 TO 50 B.C.

THE territory bounded by the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Rhine, and the Ocean, of which the greater part now bears the name of France, was known to the ancients by that of Gaul; and in the earliest times of which we have any record was inhabited by two races,—the Gaëls or Celts, and the Iberians.

The Gaëls, who were the more numerous, by degrees drove the Iberians into the south-west, where, under the name of *Aquitani*, they occupied the country comprised between the Garonne and the Pyrenees. Three hundred years before the Christian era, another people of kindred race, the Kymri or Belgæ, made an irruption into Gaul, and took possession of the country in the north-east, between the river Seine and the North Sea. Some of the Kymric tribes penetrated farther into the land, and established themselves in the opposite corner of Gaul, and along the western coast as far as the mouth of the river Loire. These were called Armoricans, from two Celtic words, *ar mor*, signifying *on the sea*.

Each of these three races—the Iberians or Aquitani, the Gaëls or Celts, the Kymri or Belgæ—was divided into numerous tribes, but in ancient history all are included under the one name of Gauls. Like their

kindred tribes in the island of Britain, they all followed the religion of the Druids ; all spoke different dialects of the same language ; and in many respects the national character and customs of all were similar.

They were a brave and fiery race, whose very women used to sustain the fight when the men were defeated, and who often slew themselves rather than surrender to an enemy. They were profusely hospitable, but restless, passionate, and intemperate ; and perpetually breaking out into war with each other. From time to time, as their numbers increased and the population seemed about to exceed the means of subsistence produced by their imperfect agriculture, vast hordes migrated into other lands to find or to conquer a new home. But none of their migrations had so important an influence on the future fortunes of the nation as those which led them across the Alps to plant in the north of Italy another Gaul.

In the year 590 B.C., a young chief of the *Bituriges*\* conducted a colony of his tribe over the mountains, and descended on the fertile plains watered by the Po. The Etrurian inhabitants of the land were quickly overcome, and a Gaulish settlement was founded on the spot where Milan stands now. Allured, it is said, by the fruits of the South, fresh swarms of barbarians followed in quick succession, reduced the natives of the soil to submission, and extended their settlements eastward and southward to the Adriatic Sea. All this portion of Italy was named after them Cisalpine Gaul.

Two hundred years after their first entrance into Italy, a body of Gauls, led by Brennus, crossed the Apennines, took possession of the city and territory of Clusium, and marched on towards Rome. On the banks of the Allia, eleven miles from the city, they encountered the Roman army sent out to oppose them, and inflicted on it such a defeat as rendered the name of that day and place for ever

\* A tribe inhabiting the country afterwards called *Berri*.

hateful in the annals of the Republic. Readers of Roman history know what followed,—how the citizens fled with their wives and children to take refuge in the neighbouring towns, leaving Manlius, with the bravest of their young men, to defend the Capitol—while the venerable Consular Fathers, remaining alone in the deserted city, sat calmly in the Forum waiting the approach of the barbarians, and fell, each one in his place, beneath the swords of the Gauls—the burning of Rome—the Capitol itself on the point of being taken by surprise, had not the cackle of the wakeful geese roused its defenders from their slumbers—the thousand pounds of gold weighed out to buy off the invaders, and the sudden appearance of Camillus to defeat and exterminate them. All this mixture of fact and fable, handed down by tradition, and woven by Roman historians in later days into a picturesque narrative, marks the commencement of a long and bitter strife maintained between the two nations.

In the great contest between Rome and Carthage the Gauls played an important part. In the first Punic war they undertook the defence of the Carthaginian cities in Sicily. In the second they composed the large majority of the forces with which Hannibal triumphed over the Romans at Placentia and Trebia, Thrasymene and Cannæ. They shared his reverses likewise, followed him to Africa, and saw the sun of Carthage set for ever on the plain of Zama.

Roman power was in the ascendant now. By degrees the whole of Cisalpine Gaul was brought into subjection ; and after many years of warfare, Rome, become the mistress of Italy and Sicily, and, about to close her iron grasp on Carthage and Greece, was able to carry her victorious arms into Gaul beyond the Alps.

The Romans first appeared in the country, however, only as allies and protectors of the Massilians. In the year 600 B.C. the Greeks, who had already planted some small settlements along the southern coast, built the city of *Massilia* (now *Marseille*). During many generations

the Massilians, who were a community of trading and seafaring people, dwelt unmolested in their corner of the land. But about the year 154 B.C. some of the neighbouring tribes began to harass them with incursions, and the Massilians applied for assistance to the Romans. It was readily given. The Roman troops drove away the offending Gauls, bestowed their lands on the people of Massilia, and then retired. Thirty years later, the Massilians again besought help. It was granted as before ; but this time Rome retained for herself the territory which she wrested from the barbarians, and in 123 B.C. built the city of *Aqua Sextia* (now *Aix*). This was the first Roman settlement founded in Transalpine Gaul.

Taking advantage of the enmities and quarrels which armed the various tribes against each other, the Romans inflicted two terrible defeats on the people who inhabited the south-east, and possessed themselves of all the country bordering on the river Rhone and the Mediterranean Sea, from the Alps to the Pyrenees. In 118 B.C. they founded the city of *Narbo* (now *Narbonne*), from whence all that province was afterwards called Gallia Narbonensis.

The remainder of Gaul preserved its independence yet fifty years. But its people continued to be regarded as the most obstinate and formidable enemies of Rome ; and when Julius Cæsar, the greatest commander of the republic, undertook the conquest of Gaul, the enterprise was in the highest degree popular with his countrymen.

The migration of the Helvetians, a Gaulish people of great numbers and bravery who inhabited the country now called Switzerland, afforded Cæsar the first opportunity and pretext for carrying his arms into Gaul. Prompted by the desire to find a more fertile country, the Helvetians turned their backs, as they hoped for eve , on their native valleys and mountains, burnt their towns, twelve in number, with forty villages, and set forth with wives and children, cattle and slaves, to march across Gaul to the fruitful region lying at the foot of the Pyrenees. The Allobroges, a people of Savoy,

whose territory lay immediately in the proposed line of march, dreading the incursion of so numerous and war-like a host, besought the Romans to protect them. Cæsar hastened to their assistance. He defended their frontier by throwing up fortifications which the Helvetians did not venture to attack, and obliged the migrating nation to seek another line of route. The only road which was open to them led through the defiles of the Jura, into the country of the Sequani, a tribe inhabiting the region afterwards named Franche Comté. They permitted the Helvetians to pass unmolested through their land into the territory of the Æduans, a numerous tribe whose lands lay westward of the Sequani. And now the Æduans, in their turn, applied to Cæsar for succour against the overflowing stream of strangers poured into their country. He marched immediately to the encounter, defeated and slaughtered the Helvetians in three terrible days of battle, and obliged the survivors to return and dwell in the land which they had forsaken.

From this time the subjugation of Gaul was in progress. Following the same policy as his predecessors, Cæsar availed himself of the feuds which divided the numerous tribes and petty states amongst which the country was apportioned, to encourage and assist them to destroy one another. At the same time he provoked both their admiration and their fears by his victories over the German invaders of Gaul, and by the unsparing severity with which he exterminated them.

But when the Gauls at length perceived that the real object at which the Roman commander aimed was nothing less than the destruction of their national liberties, they behaved with a heroism worthy of a better fate. Nothing which either virtue or courage, craft or desperation could suggest for the defence of their country, was left unattempted. One young chief especially, Vercingetorix, of the tribe of the Arverni,\* displayed a

\* A people from whom *Auvergne* takes its name

genius and activity which, if opposed to an antagonist less gifted than Cæsar, might have worked out the deliverance of his people. But all was in vain.

Blocked up at length in his last remaining city, Alesia, which the Romans had encompassed with a triple line of fortified works and trenches, the store of food exhausted, and no means of defence left, the Gaulish chieftain gave the last and noblest proof of patriotism by yielding himself into the hands of the enemy, as a ransom for the life of his followers. Arrayed in his richest armour, he rode into the Roman camp, presented himself before the tent of the general, and in token of submission silently cast on the ground his helmet, sword, and javelin. Less noble than his prisoner, Cæsar ordered him to be loaded with fetters. Vercingetorix languished six years in a Roman dungeon; he was then brought out to be exhibited with other captives in the triumphal procession of the conqueror, and was presently afterwards put to death by the hands of the executioner.

The fall of Alesia (52 B.C.) broke the strength and spirit of the Gauls. In the west a few tribes, as yet unsubdued, still struggled for liberty. But they were crushed, as their brethren had been, with merciless severity. The little city of Uxellodunum, in the country of the Cadurci,\* was the last place which resisted the Roman arms. Cæsar subdued it by cutting off the supply of water, and caused all the men who had taken part in the defence to have their hands chopped off.

Such was the cruel close of this terrible war, in which Cæsar in eight campaigns had taken eight hundred places by assault, subdued three hundred tribes, and fought with three millions of men, of whom one-third had perished in battle or had been slaughtered in cold blood, and another third had been reduced to slavery.

\* Inhabitants of the country of *Cahors*, on the river Lot.



## CHAPTER II.

Gaul under the Romans.—Its Division into four great Provinces.—Progress of Civilization.—Revolt of Civilis: Sabinus and Eponina.—Incursions of the Barbarians.—Deterioration of the National Character and Condition.—Revolt of the Slaves or *Bagaudæ*.—Alteration of the Language and Name of the Gauls.—Christianity in Gaul.—Persecution of Lyons.

FROM 50 B.C. TO 304 A.D.

THE whole of Gaul being now brought into subjection, Cæsar endeavoured to repair in some degree the miseries he had inflicted on her. To make the yoke of servitude sit more lightly on the conquered people, he refrained from burdening them with taxes, a yearly tribute only excepted, which was to be paid henceforward to Rome. He also permitted them to retain their national laws and customs. The cruel sacrifices of human beings offered by the Druids were indeed forbidden; but those atrocious rites long continued to be sacred in the eyes of the Gauls, and were still practised by Druid priests in the deep recesses of the forests, far removed from the observation of the Roman governors and garrisons. And while the most inhuman part of the Druidical worship was thus retained in Gaul, the inhabitants also adopted the paganism of Rome, and erected temples to the numerous gods and goddesses of their conquerors.

After the conquest the country was divided into four great provinces: Celtic Gaul, which comprised the country between the Seine, the Saône, and the Loire; Belgic Gaul, which was bounded by the Rhine, the Seine, and the Alps; Aquitaine, which extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire; and Gallia Narbonensis,

which was bounded by the Mediterranean, the Cevennes, the Pyrenees, and the Alps.

Under the Roman dominion Gaul began to assume the appearance of a civilized country. Roads were opened ; forests gave place to cultivated fields ; numerous cities were built, adorned with stately buildings, and enriched by the pursuit of commerce and the useful arts. Lyons, which the Romans called *Lugdunum*, was the residence of the Roman governor and the chief seat of imperial authority in Gaul. From its gates four great military roads led to the Atlantic, the Rhine, the Channel, and along the Rhone and the coast of the Mediterranean to the Pyrenees. Next to Lyons in consequence were Trèves on the Moselle, Autun, Nismes, Bordeaux, Narbonne, Toulouse, Vienne, and Arles. Besides the four great provinces, the country was divided into sixty inferior governments, each of which included a chief city with its adjacent territory, and had civic magistrates and officers after the pattern of Rome.\*

Public schools were founded in the principal places. Those of Lyons, Autun, and Bordeaux acquired a great reputation, and sent forth many learned men, orators and poets, who, however, wrote and spoke not in their native tongue, but in that of Rome.

But in proportion as the Gauls acquired the language, arts, and habits of their conquerors, they lost their old love of country and national pride. Schemes of revolt were often meditated, yet seldom put into effect. Their last attempt at independence was made at the death of the emperor Vitellius, when Civilis, a native of Batavia, seconded by the fair Velleda, a famous Druid prophetess, rallied round his standard both his own countrymen and the inhabitants of Belgic Gaul. A Gaul, named Sabinus, was proclaimed emperor, and Druid seers came forth from their retreats in the forests, and announced that the

\* It will be seen in a succeeding chapter that these divisions of the country were altered, and the number largely increased, in process of time.



dominion of the Romans was at an end, and that of the Gauls about to begin. The insurrection spread widely, and two legions of the army joined the insurgents. But the sceptre of Vitellius had passed into the hands of Vespasian, and under his firm, vigilant rule all attempts to shake off the Roman yoke were vain. Civilis, defended by the almost inaccessible marshes and thickets of his native land, maintained his independence for a time ; but Sabinus, beaten on the field of battle and abandoned by all his adherents, was forced to conceal himself in a vault. In this living tomb his wife, Eponina, buried herself with him during nine years. He was discovered at length, dragged from his hiding-place, and carried to Rome. In vain Eponina made her way to the emperor, and, embracing his knees, pleaded for the life of her husband ; Sabinus was condemned to die, and his faithful wife, as a last favour, sought and obtained permission to die with him.

For about one hundred years Gaul remained in quietness. But the fierce Germanic tribes, whom Rome had never been able to subdue, were already hovering on her frontiers ; and in proportion as the national spirit of Gaul decayed, and her ancient warlike habits gave place to the love of ease and luxury, the incursions of her barbarian neighbours became more frequent and formidable.

Meanwhile, on the imperial throne one emperor rapidly succeeded another. The whole empire was distracted by internal broils, the military commanders stationed in Gaul, Spain, Africa, Britain, &c., disputing the crown one with another. About the year 260 A.D. the legions stationed in Gaul set up their own general, Posthumus, as emperor. Posthumus, who was a native Gaul, soon fell by the hand of an assassin ; but during thirteen years several of his countrymen were successively saluted emperor by their soldiers. The last of these Gaulish Caesars was Tetricus. Weary of his uncertain elevation and of the perils to which it exposed him, he voluntarily betrayed his army, and surrendered himself

to Aurelian, who had been made emperor of Rome in 270 A.D. During the brief remainder of Aurelian's reign the terror of his name imposed some check on the barbarians; but at his death (275 A.D.) they poured into Gaul, sacked seventy cities, and strewed the north of the land with ruins.

After this time the ravages of the Germanic tribes became more terrible, and Gaul, wasted by their incursions, and burdened with heavy taxes by the imperial officers, sank into great misery. Vast tracts of land fell out of cultivation because there was no man to till them; trade languished, and the wealth of the towns was exhausted, insomuch that numbers of free citizens, reduced from affluence to penury, sold themselves into bondage.

While Gaul was yet independent, her people had been divided into three classes. At the head were the men of highest birth, the warriors, and owners of the land. Next came their clansmen or vassals, who dwelt on their lands, followed them in war, and looked up to them for protection. Last of all were the serfs, who tilled the ground, and might be bought or sold with the lands on which they laboured. After the Roman conquest, the condition of all these classes was altered, and not for the better. Julius Cæsar had indeed permitted the chief citizens of Gallia Narbonensis to aspire to a place in the Roman senate, the emperor Claudius had extended the permission to the natives of other provinces, and Caracalla had conferred the privileges of Roman citizenship on all free Gauls. But when the chiefs of Gaul began to admire the luxuries and refinements of Roman civilization, and to covet the titles and honours which were enjoyed by the nobles and officers of the imperial court, they ceased to be the friends and protectors of their people. Instead of dwelling on his own domain amongst his clansmen, the Gaulish nobleman sought his companions and amusements in the Romanized cities of his native land, or resorted to the favourite haunts of Italian fashion and gaiety. His vassals and tenants were turned out of their farms and

dwellings, that their lord's lands might be thrown into one vast estate, cultivated by slave labour. Thus the yeomanry (as we may call them), who were the very strength and heart of the Gaulish nation, decayed and disappeared.

The condition of the bondsmen themselves became worse than it had been heretofore. The utmost amount of labour was exacted from them to increase the wealth, and minister to the luxury and ostentation of their owners; and their lives were held to be of little value, since fresh labourers could always be procured in abundance in the Roman slave-markets. So great were their sufferings, that, towards the end of the third century, multitudes of slaves, mad with hunger and despair, broke into revolt, and wandered about in armed bands committing horrible excesses. They burnt several towns and shed much blood, but were themselves defeated and crushed with immense slaughter by the emperor Maximian.

The language of Gaul had undergone as great a change as the condition of the people. The youth, educated in Roman learning, soon began to despise the tongue of their forefathers as a remnant of the ancient barbarism. With his guests and equals the Gaulish gentleman spoke Latin, with learned men he conversed in Greek; Celtic was reserved for servants and labourers. By degrees even the lowest class of the people ceased to speak Celtic as formerly. They used in its stead a sort of *patois* or dialect, which was a rude mixture of Latin with their mother tongue. And, in process of time, the name of *Gauls* ceased to be applied to the natives of the land,—they were called *Romans*. Only in Armorica the people preserved their ancient language, and most of their ancient habits, being of a sturdy, rugged character, which resisted all foreign innovations or interference.

Amongst the changes which time and conquest had brought about, the one element of healing and regeneration had not been altogether wanting. "The leaven of the Gospel, which can never be wholly inert," had been

early introduced into Gaul; and amidst the growing misery of the times, many hearts, doubtless, were cheered and comforted by the knowledge of a Redeemer who could heal all sorrows and redress all wrongs: One who "shall judge the poor of the people, and save the children of the needy; and break in pieces the oppressor." About the middle of the second century, St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, sent forth missionaries into the countries beyond the Alps. Chief amongst them was Pothinus, who came into Gaul about 160 A.D., and preached the Gospel in the cities of Lyons and Vienne. Many persons were converted to the faith, and a church was founded, of which Pothinus became the first bishop. During the persecution of the Christians by the emperor Marcus Antoninus, the converts of Gaul were tried in a furnace. The venerable Pothinus, now ninety years old, was so inhumanly beaten and stoned by the populace on his way to prison, that he died presently of his wounds. His flock were reserved for more exquisite and protracted sufferings. Forty-seven persons of various ages and conditions sealed their faith with their blood, after fire and scourge, and the fury of wild beasts in the amphitheatre, had been vainly employed to tempt them to apostasy. The surviving members of the Church were dispersed. But when the fury of the persecution had abated, Irenæus, another Asiatic missionary, came to Lyons, and gathered again the scattered flock. Seventy or eighty years afterwards, missionaries came from Rome, and by their means churches were founded at Toulouse, Arles, Tours, Clermont, Paris (then called Lutetia), and some other places; and in the following century Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, and Martin, bishop of Tours, laboured with much success in the middle and west of Gaul.

## CHAPTER III.

Gaul reorganized.—Julian: Battle of Strasburg.—National Decline and corruption.—Invasions and Conquests of the Barbarians.—The Huns: Battle of Châlons.—Dissolution of the Roman Empire.

FROM 304 A.D. TO 476.

IN the fourth century the government of Gaul was organized afresh, and divided into seventeen provinces and one hundred and twenty cities, under a prefect whose seat of government was at Trèves. Each province was governed by a proconsul. Each city comprised an extensive territory, within which were inclosed several smaller towns. It possessed its body of hereditary senators, and its *curia*, or assembly of landholders, who elected municipal officers to administer the affairs of the city and territory, subject to the superior authority of the proconsul. But the proconsuls generally left the internal government of the cities to their own officers. They received indeed appeals from the sentences pronounced by the civic judges, and they fixed the amount of the sum which each city should contribute to the imperial revenue; but it was the business of the *curia* to apportion to each citizen his quota of the tax. In the year 365, the emperor Valentinian introduced an important innovation, by instituting a defender of the city (*defensor civitatis*), a sort of tribune of the people, charged to defend their interests against all oppression on the part of the imperial officers, the collectors of the revenue, or other authorities. The defender of the city was not to be selected from amongst the municipal aristocracy; and it soon became the general practice to intrust this office to the bishop.

In the increasing decay of the imperial authority, the Church appeared to be the only bulwark of order and security : and the bishops, as defenders or protectors of their respective cities (which were identical with their sees), exercised the chief authority in things secular as well as sacred.

Constantius Chlorus (A.D. 304), and his son Constantine (A.D. 306), the first Christian emperor, bestowed much care on this portion of the empire ; guarded the frontiers of Gaul from the incursions of the German tribes, and endeavoured to restore her internal prosperity. But at the death of Constantine (A.D. 337), the barbarian tribes attacked the legions posted on the border with such fury that they drove them back from the river Rhine to the Seine, and ravaged all the intervening country. Julian, afterwards emperor, in a great battle fought near Strasburg, A.D. 357, defeated seven principal German chiefs. He fixed his abode at Paris,\* and watched vigilantly over the safety of the frontier. Once more, for a short time, Gaul was freed from molestation ; but no human wisdom or vigilance could supply a lasting remedy for the evils which afflicted the country.

Like every other portion of the overgrown empire to which it had been united, Gaul was falling to pieces through the sins of her government and her people, quite as much as by the attacks of her foes from without ; and the barbarian nations who were hovering like locusts about her frontiers, did but complete the ruin which had been begun by internal discord, by the oppression of the poor, the indolent cowardly sensuality of the rich, and the

\* The whole of Paris (or *Lutetia*) was then contained within the limits of the little island in the Seine, called *Ile de la Cité*. But the palace inhabited by Julian (and believed to have been constructed by Constantius Chlorus, about 300 A.D.) stood opposite the island, on the left bank of the river. Some remains of it are preserved at Paris. Paris was the seat of a bishop from the year 245 ; its first bishop, St. Denys, was martyred (on the hill of Montmartre) in the persecution of Valerian, A.D. 272.



general corruption which pervaded all classes. Good men saw with sorrow and alarm the vices which had eaten away the strength and patriotism of the land ; but they were few in number. So reckless had the nation at large become, that we are told “all through Gaul the approaching captivity was foreseen, but never dreaded. Even when the barbarians had encamped almost within sight, there was no terror among the people, no care of the cities. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, was the spirit which possessed the multitude.”

During the fifth century, hosts of invaders—Sueves, Vandals, Goths, Huns, Franks—swept over the land wave after wave. Some merely passed through it to pillage and destroy, and retired again, carrying away many captives and much spoil ; others conquered and took possession. Very early in the century, the Goths (or *Visigoths*), led by Ataulph, a kinsman of their great chief Alaric, made themselves masters of all the country in the south-west. A few years later (413 A.D.) the Burgunds, a Vandal tribe, reduced the inhabitants of the south-east to subjection, and set up a kingdom which reached from the Alps to the confluence of the Allier and the Loire. The Ostrogoths possessed themselves of Marseilles, and all the country eastward to the mountains. The Franks had already established themselves in Belgic Gaul. Towards the middle of the fifth century, they took possession of all the land between the Scheldt and the river Somme.

The remainder of Gaul was still called *Roman* ; but the people of Armorica had struggled into independence, their chief cities forming a confederation to defend one another in case of attack. An independent colony of Saxons also had fixed itself near Bayeux ; and the Britons in the north-western corner of the land held aloof from all, dwelling under their own chiefs.

Such was the condition of the country when the Huns rose up under their terrible chief Attila to invade Italy and Gaul. The Huns, a people of Tartar race, had

migrated from Asia into Europe about the year 370 A.D. Their innumerable hordes covered the plains of South Russia, Hungary, and Poland, inspiring terror and loathing by their savage appearance.\* The Goths who inhabited those countries fled before the strangers; and the Huns pastured their flocks and pursued the chase during a period of eighty years without pushing their conquests farther. At the end of that time we find the tribes of East and South Germany obeying the dreaded king of the Huns, and even the emperor of the East paying him tribute. Not content with this, Attila, surnamed the Scourge of God, would descend on the empire of the West, and first upon Gaul.

Aëtius, a great general, was in command of the Roman forces in Gaul. All the fighting-men in the land joined him. Visigoths, Burgundians, Franks, Armoricans, Saxons, united their arms for the first and last time, in order to drive back the detested Huns. Meanwhile Attila passed through South Germany, crossed the Rhine, and poured into Gaul with all his Tartar hordes, and with them "all the Teuton tribes who had gathered in his progress as an avalanche gathers snow in its course." The Burgundians in vain essayed to turn him back at Basil,—they were defeated; and the invaders spread themselves over the land northwards and westwards, carrying terror and ruin in their train. But at Orleans their march was arrested, the garrison and citizens defending the place bravely, though with little prospect of success. Already the Huns had made a breach in the walls, and were about

\* The Goths believed them to be supernatural creatures, the offspring of demons who inhabited the Steppes: "pig-eyed, flat-faced, hideous; they ate, slept, lived on horseback." They were armed with arrows tipped with bone, and lassos of cord. With them were other savages innumerable: "Acatzirs, painted blue, hair as well as skin; Alans, armed in heavy cuirasses of plaited horn, their horses decked with human scalps; Geloni, armed with a scythe, wrapped in a cloak of human skin; Bulgars, who impaled their prisoners. . . Who could stand against them?"



to enter the city, when a large body of troops sent by Aëtius for the relief of the besieged came in sight, and Attila judged it prudent to break up his encampment and turn back, though not by the same line he had followed in his advance.

On the great plain near Châlons-on-Marne he encountered Aëtius and the confederate army. Then was fought one of the great battles of the world (A.D. 451); a fight "gigantic in its vastness and horror." After enormous slaughter, the Huns were beaten. Attila retired into Germany, from whence he crossed the Alps and descended upon Italy, which he ravaged almost to the gates of Rome; but his hordes were never more seen in Gaul, or in any part of the West of Europe.

In 395 A.D., the Roman empire had been divided into two: the empire of the East and the empire of the West. The empire of the West, of which Gaul formed part, was finally broken up in the year 476. Syagrius, the last Gallo-Roman governor, now became the king of that small portion of Gaul which had continued to acknowledge the authority of the emperor. It consisted of little more than the cities of Rheims and Soissons, with some lesser towns, and the territory which lay around them.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Franks: their Character, Origin, and First Appearance in History.—*Salian* and *Ripuarian* Franks.—Meroveus.—Clovis; Founder of the Merovingian Dynasty of the Frank Kings: his Conversion to Christianity.

FROM 476 A.D. TO 496.

TOWARDS the close of the fifth century, and with the conquest of the Frank chief Clovis, what is commonly called the History of France begins, though ages elapsed before the French monarchy could be said to exist as a distinct state, or before the name *France* was applied to it.

Salvian, a wise and religious writer of the fifth century, describing the good and evil qualities which most notably distinguished each of the barbarian races who were overrunning his native Gaul, says: "The Franks are faithless . . . . and liars, but hospitable." They were brave also, as were all the Teutonic or German races, but with a fiery eagerness for battle which seems to have been peculiarly their own. Some writers indeed suppose that they were not a distinct race or tribe at all, but a confederation of warriors who were simply "*Franken*," i.e. *free*; who recruited their numbers from any and every tribe who would join them in war and plunder. But most French historians believe that *Franken* or *Franks* was the name of certain Teutonic tribes dwelling between the Weser and the Rhine, who formed a confederacy for mutual defence about the middle of the third century.

The first mention of them in history occurs in the year 241 A.D. Fifteen years later, a horde of Franks crossed

Gaul from north to south, scaled the Pyrenees, and spread themselves over the west of Spain. But many years before this irruption into the Peninsula, a large Frank colony seems to have migrated northwards. Driven from the banks of the Rhine by the Saxons, they settled by the river Yssel, from whence they essayed to penetrate beyond the Rhine into Batavia. The Romans distinguished this people by the name of Salic or Salian Franks, from the name of the river by which they dwelt ;\* the name of the Yssel being in the Latin *Isala*. The emperor Maximian having vainly endeavoured to drive them away from the borders of Gaul, resolved to turn them to account as defenders of the frontier, and permitted them to settle as military colonists between the Moselle and the Scheldt, from Trèves as far as Tournay, A.D. 287.

About seventy years afterwards, Julian allowed another Frank tribe to found a similar colony between the Rhine and the Meuse. These were called *Ripuarian* Franks, from *ripa* (*bank*), because they dwelt along the banks of the Rhine, one of the two great rivers which formed a boundary between the Empire and the barbarian nations who had not been brought under its yoke.

The Franks who fought beside Aëtius and his Gallo-Romans at the battle of Châlons were commanded by Meerwig or Merving, chief of the Salian tribe, from whose name, in its Latinized form *Meroveus*, the first or *Merovingian* dynasty of Frank kings takes its title. Meerwig was succeeded in 458 by his son Childeric, and

\* "Learned men," says M. de Bonnechose in his History of France, "have given many derivations of the word Salian: the above is the most probable. Some have thought that the name was derived from a peculiar law respecting the inheritance of land. But the term *Salic land* signified nothing more than the portion of land, large or small, which was inseparably attached to the manor or dwelling of the head of the family, and which might not, therefore, form part of the dowry or inheritance of the daughters of the house. And this law was not peculiar to the Salian Franks.

Childeric in 481 by Chlodowig or Clovis. The Salian Franks at this period were divided into three principal families or clans, who were distinguished according to the chief settlement of each clan; as the Franks of Tournay, of Cambray, and of Théroutanne. Clovis was the head of the Franks of Tournay, and but fifteen years old when he assumed the command of his tribe. But his great bodily strength and daring courage marked him out as one born to be a leader; and in virtue of these qualities, notwithstanding his youth, the Salians of Cambray and Théroutanne, and the Ripuarian Franks, willingly joined in his enterprises, anticipating abundant fighting and much spoil under the leading of so dauntless a chieftain.

A historian of those days has left us a description of the host who followed Clovis to the conquest of Gaul. "They marched," he says, "on foot, protected by no defensive armour, bareheaded, with masses of long red hair falling between their shoulders, their bodies tightly girt about with raw hides, though naked from the knee downwards. They carried neither sling, nor bow, nor other weapons, excepting an axe and a short pike, to which was strung a barbed harpoon. Occasionally one and another warrior, fired with martial frenzy, would rush forward on the battle-field to meet inevitable death, fighting to the last with superhuman energy, amid the war-songs and acclamations of his comrades."

Clovis began his career of conquest A.D. 486, by invading the domain of Syagrius, whose mild and equitable rule deserved a longer duration. His troops, though better disciplined and armed than their barbarous antagonists, could not resist the fiery onslaught of the Frank chief. Syagrius, defeated on the field of battle, fled for refuge to the Visigoths of the south, and fell by the hand of a murderer. His territory fell into the power of Clovis, and Soissons, the capital, was given up to plunder. Amongst the precious things of which the Franks stripped the houses and churches, there was a golden vase of great value, which had been devoted to

sacred uses. Remigius, the bishop, entreated that this might be restored to the Church, and found favour in the eyes of the chief, insomuch that when all the booty was thrown together to be divided, according to the custom of the Franks, by lot, Clovis desired that this vase might first of all be allotted to himself. His followers consented, with the exception of one man, who struck the vase roughly with his battle-axe, crying out, "Thou shalt have what the lot awards thee, like the rest of us, and nothing else." Clovis dissembled his anger for the time; but a year afterwards, when he was passing his forces in review, he stopped before this man, and snatching his axe from him, on pretence that it was not in good condition, he clove his skull with one blow, saying, "*Remember the vase of Soissons!*"

The victory which the Frank chief had gained over Syagrius was an omen of the success which was to attend him through life. Here, however, it is necessary to pause a moment to review the religious condition of Gaul, since this had much to do with the victorious career of the Franks. The native, or, as they were then called, *Roman* inhabitants of Gaul, but whom modern historians usually distinguish as *Gallo-Romans*, were Catholics, governed by prelates who acknowledged the bishop of Rome as their head. The bishops exercised much of the power which had formerly been in the hands of the imperial officers; and though Gaul no longer owned any civil or political dependence on "the Eternal City," they kept up in the minds of the people a certain feeling of union with and subordination to Rome by the bonds of their religious faith.

On the other hand, the Visigoths and Burgundians, who had conquered the fairest portions of the land, were Arians.\* They did not acknowledge for themselves the

\* At the commencement of the fourth century, Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, began to deny that our Lord was God from everlasting, *One* with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Notwithstanding the pains taken by many wise and holy men to uphold the truth

authority of the Catholic bishops ; and though the Catholic clergy and people of Gaul were not in any way molested by their Arian rulers, the bishops naturally felt aggrieved at the intermixture of a heretical people with their flocks, and at their own subjection to heretical rulers. They thought it might even be better if the kingdoms of the Visigoths and Burgundians were to pass into the hands of Clovis, fierce heathen and worshipper of Odin as he was, since the Franks and their chief might perhaps be converted to the true faith, whereas the princes who now ruled in the south and east of Gaul were entirely satisfied with their own form of doctrine. As a means to this end, the Catholic bishops gladly promoted the marriage of Clovis with the Burgundian princess Clotilda, the only lady of the royal house who professed the true faith.

Clotilda was the daughter of a Burgundian prince who had been slain by his own brother, the reigning king of Burgundy, Gondobald. The desire that his blood might be avenged, as well as the religious differences which divided her from her Arian kindred and countrymen, made Clotilda willingly incite her husband to undertake the conquest of Burgundy. Nor did Clovis need much prompting, when the enterprise was one so congenial with his own love of war and domination. But before he could turn his arms against the Burgundians, it was necessary to expel the Allemanni, who had advanced in

against Arius and his followers, their heresy spread widely, being greatly favoured by several of the emperors. Amongst other principal persons who unhappily embraced Arianism was Ulfilas, bishop of the Goths, A.D. 348, who was the first to teach that people the use of letters, invented an alphabet for them, and translated the Scriptures into their language. He also taught them many of the useful arts, and was so revered by that nation that he was surnamed *the Moses of the Goths*. Under his teaching the Goths generally received the heresy of Arius. Thus the Visigoths in Gaul and Spain were Arians, and the Burgundians, having received their first instruction in Christianity from Gothic teachers, were Arians also.



great force into the territory of the Ripuarian Franks. He encountered the invaders at Tolbiac, near Cologne (A.D. 496), and a desperate battle ensued. The day was going against the Franks, when Clovis raised his hands to heaven, and called aloud on *Clotilda's God* to help him, vowing that if he might but prevail in this battle, he would henceforward worship no other God. Returning, then, with fresh fury to the fight, he broke the columns of the enemy, and slew their chief. The Allemanni, defeated and dispersed, promised subjection and obedience. Some of their warriors joined the Franks; the remainder withdrew peaceably to their own country.\*

Clovis was not unmindful of his vow. As soon as he returned from the war, he desired St. Remigius to instruct him in the Christian faith; and at the following Christmas he was baptized at Rheims. The darkness of a December night wrapt all without in gloom when Clovis entered the cathedral. It was hung with rich carpets, perfumed with incense, and radiant with the light of innumerable tapers. The sound of many voices chanting the Psalms filled the air with melody; and the king, dazzled and overawed, asked his instructor, "Is this the kingdom of heaven you have promised me?" "No," said the bishop, "but it is the beginning of the way which leads to it." When they came to the font, Remigius, addressing his royal convert by the name common to the ancient German warriors—a name in which Clovis took great pride,—said, "Seecamber, bow thy neck: burn what thou hast adored, and adore what thou hast burned." Following the example of their leader, three thousand Frank warriors were baptized on the same day.

The tidings of Clovis's conversion and baptism were received with much satisfaction at Rome. He sent gifts

\* The Allemanni were a confederacy of German tribes who had their settlements on the eastern bank of the Upper Rhine.

to the Pope in token of fealty, and received in return letters of friendship and congratulation, greeting him as the *Eldest Son of the Church*, a title which was preserved by successive dynasties of French kings during a period of thirteen hundred years.



## CHAPTER V.

Clovis conquers Burgundy and Aquitaine: Battle of Poitiers, 507 A.D.—He receives the title and insignia of Consul from the Emperor of the East: Destroys all his kindred Chieftains: convokes the Council of Orleans, 510 A.D.—Close of his Career.—Effect of the Frank Conquest on Gaul.

FROM 496 A.D. TO 511.

IN as far as we can judge from the recorded history of Clovis, his professed change of faith was not accompanied by any corresponding change of character. Fierce and false he had been in the beginning of his career, false and fierce he continued to the end. But his assumption of the Christian name and adhesion to the orthodox Catholic Church had very important effects on his position as a king. Henceforward all the Catholic people of Gaul recognized in him their natural ally and protector.

The free cities of Armorica opened their gates to him, and sent their soldiers, armed and disciplined after the manner of Rome, to fight side by side with his skin-clad warriors. The bishops of Burgundy invited him to invade their country as the champion of the faith. They had vainly endeavoured to turn King Gondebald from his Arian errors by menacing him with the arms of Clovis: he was not to be so persuaded. Provoked at his obstinate continuance in heresy, the bishops spared not their reproaches, denouncing him in the harshest terms as a rebellious and profane offender against the law of God—nay, even a madman. Gondebald, who was now far advanced in years, and whom either age or policy rendered singularly forbearing, answered his accusers: "Not so. I obey the law of God,

but I cannot believe as you do. But if your faith be, as you say, better than ours, why do you not prove it to be so by dissuading the king of the Franks from marching upon us to destroy us?"—a reasonable question, to which no satisfactory answer could be given.

Clovis speedily entered Burgundy at the head of a numerous army, and advanced into the heart of the kingdom, wasting all before him with fire and sword. The Burgundians fought bravely, but with little success. Of all the Teutonic tribes, they are said to have been the most remarkable for their love of settled habitations and their readiness to engage in the labours of the field and the forge. Since their acquisition of a kingdom in Gaul, they had been dwelling peaceably in the land, and in general apart from each other, each man on his own domain, surrounded by his household and his labourers, his herds and flocks. He was now to provide for the safety of his family and his possessions, if possible, as well as to join his brethren in doing battle with the invaders; while the Franks poured in, horde after horde of armed men, unencumbered by care for wife or child, cattle or goods, all these being safe far away in their own settlements.

After much blood had been shed, Gondebald, overpowered by the multitude of his assailants, was forced to sue for peace. The Franks imposed a tribute on him, and on all the cities of Burgundy; and having made him swear to be their ally and soldier, and to submit himself in spiritual matters to the Catholic Church, they returned to their own territories, carrying with them an immense booty. This sanguinary war was lauded by the partisans of Clovis as a holy enterprise undertaken for the triumph of the true faith. Gondebald, still unconvinced, inquired, "How the true faith could consist with coveting other men's goods, and thirsting for their blood?"

But the Franks who had conformed, at least in outward seeming, to the religion adopted by their chief, retained, like him, under their new name of Christian, the same

ferocious character which they had exhibited as worshippers of Odin. By them the slaughter of misbelievers was regarded as a sacrifice acceptable to the Deity ; and with an eagerness inflamed by mistaken religious zeal, as well as by the lust of power and plunder, they thirsted to attack the Arians who ruled over the fair lands of South Gaul. Having weakened and humbled the Burgundians too effectually to allow of their rendering assistance to their brother heretics in Aquitaine, Clovis prepared now to attack the kingdom of the Visigoths. Addressing his chief warriors seated round him on the ground, "I hate," he said, "to see these Goths, who are Arians, possessing the finest part of Gaul. Let us go with the aid of God and drive them out, and take their land. We shall do well in this, for the land is very good." The air rang with acclamations at these welcome words, and the whole assembly leaping to their feet, were soon on their way to smite and dispossess the heretics.

All the people of the country lying south of the river Loire were subjects or tributaries of the Visigoth king of Aquitaine, Alaric II., and he possessed a powerful ally and protector in Dietrich (or Theodoric) the Great, the Gothic king of Italy, whose daughter he had married. Yet the throne of Alaric was far less secure than it appeared to be, for he ruled over a kingdom divided within itself. Difference of religion as much as of race had prevented the Gallo-Roman inhabitants of Aquitaine from becoming cordially united with their Visigoth conquerors, though they were too unwarlike to offer any opposition to their rule. And in Aquitaine, as well as in Burgundy, most of the orthodox clergy regarded Clovis as the instrument employed by Heaven for the maintenance of the true faith, and taught their flocks to do likewise. Resistance to such a warrior might well seem to them impious as well as hopeless.

The Visigoths themselves, though no religious scruples withheld them from arming in self-defence, were not without alarming misgivings as to the issue of a contest in

which they were to fight face to face with foes who had hitherto proved invincible. Unlike the savage Franks, who contemned the remains of the old Roman civilization in Gaul as the mark of a weak and effeminate race, the Visigoths had no sooner established themselves in Aquitaine, than they began to emulate the refinement and to acquaint themselves with the learning of the people whom they had conquered. The enervating influences of a softer climate and more luxurious living combined with their altered habits and pursuits to abate something of their ancient vigour and martial spirit. They were nevertheless a brave people, and prepared to offer a resolute resistance to the invaders of their territory.

The Franks had already crossed the Loire, the northern frontier of the kingdom; for Alaric, whose forces were inferior in number to those of Clovis, and whose youth and inexperience made him unwilling to encounter alone so formidable an antagonist, had retreated southwards in hope of being joined by the army of Theodoric before Clovis should come up with him.

Meantime the terror of the Franks went far before them, and rumours of strange sights and portents were spread abroad in the towns of Aquitaine. It was reported that at Toulouse a fountain of blood had suddenly burst forth in the midst of the city and flowed for a whole day. A bright meteor hung night after night over the cathedral of Poitiers, and its flame, seen from afar, guided the invaders on their way. Heavy rains had swollen the river Vienne to a flood which the Franks could find no place to cross, when lo! a white hart appeared, coming no man knew whence, and conducted them to a safe ford. Whether with or without the assistance of so singular a guide, Clovis found means to overtake Alaric when he was yet but a little way from Poitiers (A.D. 507). A desperate battle ensued, in which the descendants of the old Arverni fought valiantly on the side of the Visigoths, and lost all the chief men of their nation. Alaric himself fell by the hand of Clovis, and his countrymen, after

a gallant but ineffectual endeavour to avenge his death, were forced to fly.

The Franks, flushed with victory, passed through the land to the foot of the Pyrenees, pillaging the towns, wasting the cultivated lands, and carrying off the people into slavery. Much of the gold and silver and fine linen taken from the Arian churches they bestowed on the Catholic bishops, who looked on the triumph of the Franks as their own. "Thou shinest," the bishop of Valence said to the conqueror, "in power and majesty; and when thou fightest, to us is the victory."

Most of the principal cities were surrendered to the Franks without resistance by the Catholic portion of the inhabitants; but Carcassone and Arles, where the Visigoths were most numerous, held out resolutely until Theodoric arrived to stay the progress of the invaders. He defeated them with enormous slaughter before Arles, and forced them to raise the siege of that city and of Carcassone. After this peace was made. The country along the shores of the Mediterranean, Arles, Narbonne, &c., as far as the river Durance, remained to Theodoric and his grandchild Amalaric, the young son of Alaric II. The territories watered by the Garonne, the Charente, the Dordogne, &c., from the Loire to the Pyrenees, and from the Ocean to the mountains of Auvergne, were made over to the Franks.

Clovis next encroached on his allies the Armoricans, obliged their chief cities to pay him tribute, and garrisoned them with his own men. The immigrants from Britain alone preserved their independence in the nook of land where they had taken refuge. With the exception of this small peninsula in the north-west, and the remnant of the Visigoth possessions in the south-east, the whole of Gaul, from the Rhine to the Atlantic and the Pyrenees, was now governed by Clovis or tributary to him.

The fame of his power and victories spread widely, insomuch that the emperor of the East, Anastasius I., complimented him with the title and insignia of Consul.

Although the Roman empire was now dissolved, and all the western portion of it broken up into a variety of kingdoms and states, it had so long been the great ruling power of the earth, that even the barbaric races who had rent it in pieces attached a kind of mysterious value to its ancient names of office and dignity. Clovis accordingly assumed the new title conferred upon him with extraordinary pomp, in the church of St. Martin, at Tours, the most venerated sanctuary in Gaul; and from that day forward he was called Consul and Augustus.

But though he had swept through Gaul as a conqueror, and had subjected to his control a far larger portion of the country than had yet obeyed one man since the Roman power declined in the land, the ambition of the Frank king was not wholly satiated. There was still a territory, inhabited by men of his own race and governed by chiefs of his own lineage, in which he was acknowledged as an ally but not as a sovereign; and all his widely extended dominions failed to satisfy him as long as he could not obtain this comparatively insignificant possession.

The Franks, we have said, were distinguished as *Riparian* and *Salian* Franks; the Salians again divided into three tribes, those of Tournay, of Théroutanne, and of Cambray. From the earliest period at which history makes mention of the Franks, each division of the nation had been governed by a *Kyning* or chieftain of its own; but all these chiefs were members of one family, the same to which Meroveus and his grandson Clovis belonged, and which was believed to be descended from the gods of Scandinavia. While the rest of the Franks shaved the hair on the back part of the head, the men of the ruling family allowed it to descend in long curls on their shoulders, in token of the supposed divine descent which constituted their principal title to the headship of their tribe.\*

\* Ages after Christianity had become the only religion professed by the Franks established in Gaul, this supposed descent from the gods of their heathen forefathers preserved in the minds of the



At this time Sighebert was king of the Ripuarian Franks ; Hararik of the Salians of Théroutanne ; Ragnehaher of those of Cambray. All had willingly assisted Clovis in his wars, but they refused to surrender to him their independence. Neither would they follow his example by forsaking the gods of their forefathers ; and Clovis, who had resolved to destroy every chieftain whose pretensions might interfere with those of his own descendants, found a convenient excuse for the extermination of these princes in their obstinate adherence to paganism. He accomplished his design by a mixture of cunning and violence.

During the invasion of Aquitaine, Chlodéric, the son of Sighebert, had been his companion and fellow-soldier, and had fallen much under his influence. The youth was already eagerly anticipating the period when he should succeed to the chieftainship of his tribe. Clovis, by flatteries and deceitful promises, so inflamed his ambition, that the wretched Chlodéric at length murdered his father, the sooner to obtain the coveted dignity. He expected aid and justification from Clovis ; but the latter, affecting the utmost horror at the parricide of which he had been the instigator, marched a numerous army into the territory of the Ripuarian Franks, procured the assassination of Chlodéric, and proposed himself to be their chief. The Ripuarians, whom the violent deaths of Sighebert and his son had deprived in a few weeks of both their princes, were in no condition to refuse compliance. Raising Clovis on a buckler, according to their custom, they proclaimed him king.

He next turned himself to the Salians, and brought about the ruin of their chiefs by the help of traitors among their own followers. Hararik and his sons were delivered over to him before they had time to take arms in self-defence. Ragnehaher and his brother were betrayed to him on the field of battle, and brought into people a certain veneration for the Merovingian princes, sunk as they then were in utter uselessness and incapacity.

his presence loaded with chains. "Wretch!" exclaimed Clovis, addressing the unhappy chief, "how darest thou thus dishonour our blood! Thou a Salian, and sufferest thyself to be fettered!" And with one blow he struck off the head of Ragnehaher. Then turning to his brother, "And thou, why couldst not thou defend thy brother better? He would not have suffered that shame." Another stroke from the axe, red with the blood of Ragnehaher, felled the defenceless captive to the ground.

Clovis promised to spare the lives of Hararik and his sons, on condition of their receiving baptism, and spending the rest of their days in a monastery; but he ordered their long hair to be cut off, in token of their degradation from the royal rank. Unhappily Hararik was heard to say, "What signifies cutting off the leaves of a green tree? they will sprout again." These words, implying the hope of restoration which he cherished for his sons, if not for himself, were reported to Clovis, who immediately caused both father and children to be put to death.

Clovis had now accomplished his purpose. The Franks of every tribe acknowledged him as their king, for not a man of the ruling family remained alive excepting himself and his sons. But even the barbarous Franks were somewhat appalled at so many murders; and though too many of the Gaulish clergy extenuated or justified them all on the ground that the princes who had perished were heathens and opposers of the faith, a few good men ventured to lift up their voices in condemnation of such deeds. Shortly after the slaughter of Hararik and his sons, Clovis came to Tournay, and repaired as usual to the cathedral at the hour of public prayer. But Eleutherius, the bishop, met him on the threshold, and said, "O king, I know why thou comest to seek me." In vain Clovis protested that he had no particular reason or desire to consult the bishop. Eleutherius replied, "Speak not thus. Thou hast sinned, and thou darest not confess it. The remorse of Clovis was awakened; he shed tears,



owned that he was guilty, and prayed the bishop to intercede that he might be forgiven.

Desirous, perhaps, to make amends by some good for past evil, Clovis in his latter days bestowed much attention on the affairs of the Church. At Orleans, in 510, he convoked a council of all the bishops in his dominions, and cemented the union of the clergy with the crown by a mutual agreement concerning the rights and the property of each party. Under the Christian emperors of Rome, the clergy had enjoyed exemption from the poll-tax, the land-tax, &c. This privilege, which had encouraged and enabled them to cultivate many neglected districts of Gaul, was confirmed by Clovis, who also extended and ratified former gifts of very large domains to the Church. He recognized the right of priests to be tried only by their own ecclesiastical superiors; and he allowed the right of sanctuary in certain holy places. In return, the council decreed that no freeman should be admitted to holy orders without the king's permission, and no bondman without the consent of his owner.

And here it must be observed, that the Frank conquerors of Gaul claimed such superiority over the conquered natives, in virtue of their warlike prowess, that even the higher class of Gallo-Romans had, in general, no means of raising themselves to anything like social equality but by admission to the priesthood. Whatever learning still existed in the country was possessed by the clergy; all the useful arts of life were cultivated in the abbeys and monasteries; and thus the services of the priests and monks were in many ways valuable to the rude soldiers who by right of conquest had become the nobles and rulers of Gaul. But if the freeman might well be tempted to raise himself out of his depressed condition by assuming the sacred office, much more might the despised and oppressed serf look longingly to the Church and the cloister, the only asylum open to the wretched and the defenceless, the only community in which no invidious distinction was made between the bond and the free, the

victor and the vanquished. In like manner, the right of sanctuary and the exemption of the clergy from secular jurisdiction, privileges which in after-ages were grievously abused, were of eminent service in that time of violence and rapine, when the clergy were perpetually called upon to interfere between the oppressed and the oppressor, and to deliver, if possible, the poor out of the hand of him that spoiled them.

The diffusion of Christianity among the Frank tribes over whom he had recently obtained supremacy, was among the latest cares of the king. But both amongst these people and those of Clovis's own tribe, heathenism long asserted its power. Clovis died in 511, leaving four sons, among whom his dominions were divided.

Notwithstanding the crimes of this king, who exhibited in their darkest aspect the vices of savage life, we must regard him as an instrument employed by Providence to fuse together in one nation the people of Gaul, who possessed a knowledge of Christianity, and preserved some remains of ancient Roman civilization, law and learning, and the vigorous, warlike, but ignorant and savage Franks. By this intermixture was laid the basis of the great commonwealth which, under its various forms of the Kingdom, Republic, and Empire of France, has played so important a part in the history of Europe. But though Clovis laid the first stone, the fabric was long in building, and in the days of his later descendants seemed even to retrograde rather than to advance.

## CHAPTER VI.

Part I.—Laws and Customs of the Nations who were now permanently settled in Gaul. Part II.—Division of the Empire of Clovis.—Conquest of his sons: Clotaire sole king: St. Radegonde.

FROM 511 A.D. TO 589.

*Part I.*—Before pursuing the history of the successors of Clovis, it is necessary to say something concerning the laws and customs of the various races who had now permanently established themselves in Gaul; more especially with respect to those of the Franks who had become the lords of the land. The title of *Kyning* or *King*, which the Franks bestowed on their chiefs, by no means implied the possession of power and prerogatives similar to those which are associated in our minds with the idea of royalty. To head their expeditions of war and plunder was the principal duty which the Franks required at the hands of their king, and the principal honour which they designed to confer on him. "The camp was his seat of empire. In the division of the booty he was entitled to the largest share; in all festivities to the most conspicuous place; in every national assembly to the highest influence, as the foremost freeman among the tribes of his confederacy." But in other respects he possessed no pre-eminence over the warriors who followed him, excepting only the traditional superstitious reverence which attached to every member of a family deriving its origin from the gods.

When he died, the warriors assembled, elected a successor, and, raising the man of their choice on a buckler, proclaimed him king amidst the shouts of the people. The land which the Franks acquired by conquest was divided amongst the warriors by lot, but a portion far

exceeding that of his followers was always assigned to the king. On their invasion of Gaul, they found vast territories unpeopled and abandoned by the plough. In these they received the reward of their dangers and their toils ; but they took possession also of much of the cultivated land, with whatever pertained to it,—farms, cattle, serfs, and, not least, of their owners also, who were now reduced to become the assistants and overseers of their own bondmen, and compelled to till the ground for the benefit of its new masters.

All the lands, waste or cultivated, which the Franks had thus acquired, were called *sortes*, because they had been apportioned by lot, and *al-ods*, because in the case of each man they constituted the whole of his gain or booty. And these *sortes* or *al-ods* were held free from rent or service to any superior lord. Over and above the *al-ods* or allodial lands, and those also which the ancient Gallo-Roman owners were permitted to retain, there remained a vast extent of territory, which fell to the share of the king. Some portions of this he bestowed on his *Leudes*. Leudes was the name given to the chieftain's companions in arms, who followed his fortunes and formed a class by themselves, bound to him by an oath of fidelity, and intrusted with such authority as the chief was inclined or empowered to delegate to other hands than his own.

In process of time, however, the king's lands became the means with which he purchased and enforced the military services of his countrymen. To serve his captain in the field and to subsist on the spoils of the enemy had been the duty and the delight of every free German. The Frank still confessed the duty, but ceased to feel the delight, after he had become a settler in Gaul. He learnt to set a high value on the enjoyment of the domain which his own prowess or that of his forefathers had acquired for him. His spontaneous military ardour died away, and it became necessary to rekindle it by new incentives. Large tracts of land carved out of the royal domains were therefore bestowed by the Frank kings on

some of the principal warriors, on condition that they should serve him in time of war, and that each should supply and equip a number of armed men in proportion to the extent and value of the lands bestowed on him. Lands granted on these conditions were called *benefices* (*beneficia*).

In this manner an aristocracy of Frank lords and landowners was established in Gaul. First of all were the chiefs of the principal families or clans, settled with their people on their allodial lands, which in many cases were of vast extent. Some of these came in time to be called by titles equivalent to those of duke and count. Important cities and districts were under their government, and were ruled by them with almost independent authority. Next to the great chiefs were the holders of benefices, each of whom had under his command a body of followers collected from among his ancient companions in arms. The greater territorial lords also followed the example of the king, and created benefices by assigning certain portions of their lands to their principal followers, on condition that the latter should render them service in war or otherwise.

It was the ancient custom of the Franks (as of other Teutonic nations) to meet once a year in arms at a great national assembly, called, according to the month in which it was held, the *Champ de Mars* or *Champ de Mai*. At these assemblies all affairs of national importance were discussed, judges were elected, and criminals of more than ordinary note were tried. But after the Franks had become masters of Gaul, and dispersed themselves abroad over the conquered territories, the sentiment of national unity seems to have been greatly enfeebled; they became very remiss in attending these meetings, and the kings no longer convoked them regularly as heretofore. But all Frank freemen had a right to assist in administering justice in their respective tribes, and were wont to act both as judges and jury in hearing and trying offenders. After their establishment in Gaul, the land was divided into counties and hundreds, in which

assemblies of the freemen, resembling the *hundred-gemot* and *shire-mote* of our own England in Saxon times, met at certain stated periods. A council, or assembly of warriors, called a *mallum*, was frequently held also in each of the chief Frank settlements, to deliberate and decide on the affairs of the clan which had established itself in that portion of Gaul; and the power of the *mallum* was often employed to reduce the native inhabitants of the soil to a bondage which became ever more and more galling.

Each race of men in Gaul was governed by its own laws. The Gallo-Romans had the old Roman code. The Burgunds, the Goths, the Salian and Ripuarian Franks, had each their peculiar laws and customs; concerning which it may be observed that those of the Franks were of all the most barbarous, and the least mindful of the rights of the conquered. Thus, Franks, Goths, and Burgundians alike looked upon murder as an injury to be atoned for by payment of a fine; but the Goths and Burgundians inflicted on the murderer a penalty of equal amount, whether his victim had been a Gaul or one of their own countrymen, while the Franks punished the murderer of a Gaul with a fine only half as large as that which they imposed on the man who killed a Frank. Thus also when the Goths and Burgundians conquered territories in Gaul, they secured to the native proprietors one-third of their lands, and two-thirds of the slaves belonging to them; but the Franks imposed no such restraint on their own cupidity.

In each of the ancient Gallo-Roman cities, an officer appointed by the king, and bearing the title of *Count*, acted as governor; his rule being, however, shared and mitigated by the bishop; and in some degree by the native magistrates and municipal officers, who still retained in name the authority with which they had been invested in the old Roman times, though they were greatly restricted in the exercise of it. For, although the barbarians had overturned the imperial administration in Gaul, they had not destroyed the interior organization of



the cities. But the permanent presence of the Frank count, invested with all the powers of the king, was a constant source of intimidation. The Church was, in fact, the only power which imposed any effectual restraint on the violence and rapine of the Frank conquerors. The bishop acted as chief judge concurrently with the count ; and (as we have said above) Franks, Gallo-Romans, Burgundians, Visigoths, were each judged according to their own laws. The count received the tribute and taxes payable to the king ; he convoked the ban of the freemen, and led them to the army. In the cities of the south, for reasons which will appear presently, the power exercised by the bishop and by the municipal magistrates was much greater than in other parts of Gaul.

*Part II.*—Each of the sons of Clovis having been elected king over a portion of his father's empire, the four princes fixed on Paris, Orleans, Soissons, and Rheims for their respective capitals. But Rheims soon gave place to Metz. All these cities were north of the Loire, and comprised within comparatively narrow limits ; but the Franks regarded the territory which contained them as peculiarly their own. The great provinces south of the Loire, filled with traces of the Roman occupation, and possessing cities larger, richer, and more populous than those of the north, and adorned with many relics of Roman magnificence, never became the permanent or favourite abodes of their Frank masters. Large bodies of soldiers stationed in the southern provinces kept them in subjection, but the conquerors intermeddled little in the internal government of the country. Few Franks, comparatively, settled in those rich territories ; those who did so adopted, by degrees, the language and habits of the Gallo-Roman population, and in the course of a few generations became identified with them.

About the middle of the sixth century, a race of mountaineers, called *Vascons* or *Gascons*, the descendants of the ancient Iberians who had taken refuge in the



Pyrenees, came down from their old seats to settle in Aquitaine, and became blended with its population, to which they imparted a measure of their own fiery independent spirit, thereby increasing and confirming the reluctance of the Aquitanians to obey the rulers of northern Gaul.

From these causes the south generally, but especially the south-west, long remained a people separate in language, in customs, and in national feeling from the inhabitants of the other parts of Gaul ; and though sometimes reduced for a time under obedience to the kings of the successive French dynasties, it struggled against the yoke with sufficient success to maintain almost entire independence in reality, though not *in name*, until the beginning of the thirteenth century.

The history of the descendants of Clovis may be briefly passed over ; it is dark with crime. But his immediate successors possessed in full measure the warlike ardour of their race : they possessed themselves of Burgundy and Thuringia, and forced the tribes who inhabited Franconia, Saxony, Bavaria, and Suabia, to become members of the Frankish confederation.

Sigismund, the son of Gondebald, had succeeded his father in the kingdom of Burgundy. He was attacked by the sons of Clovis at the instigation of their mother, who could not be satisfied that her father's blood was avenged so long as a son of the man who had slain him lived and reigned. Sigismund, defeated in battle, fell into the hands of the Frank princes, who threw him, his wife and children, into a well. But it cost them nearly ten years' warfare to overcome the resistance of the Burgundians to a foreign rule.

One son of Clovis overran the Gothic kingdom in the south of Gaul (A.D. 536). In another expedition (542) the Franks invaded Spain, but were arrested by the fortifications of Saragossa, and eventually retreated northwards, making little or no use of their southern conquests excepting for the purpose of plunder.

Theudebert, the grandson of Clovis, was at once solicited by Justinian, emperor of the East, to help to drive the Goths out of Italy, and by the Goths to help them against Justinian. Theudebert made fair promises to each party, took payment from both, then marched into Italy with a numerous army, attacked both Goths and Romans, pillaged and overran all Lombardy, and, after committing enormous cruelties, returned home laden with booty. A few years afterwards, this savage met with a fitting end, being killed at a hunting-match by a wild bull; and by the year 556, Clothaire, the youngest son of Clovis, was left sole possessor of the empire. It embraced Roman Gaul in its utmost extent, besides large territories in Germany.

To enlarge his own power, Clothaire had murdered the young sons of one of his brothers after their father's death. Towards the close of his life, one of his own sons rebelled against him. Clothaire took him prisoner, and burnt him alive with his wife and daughters. A year after this horrible execution he died himself, exclaiming in his last moments, "Who is this King of Heaven who kills the great kings of the earth?" (A.D. 561).

Like most of the princes of his race, Clothaire had a plurality of wives. The life of one of them, long remembered with affectionate veneration as *Saint Radegonde*, presents a welcome contrast to the gross barbarism, licentiousness, and ignorance which prevailed at the court of the early Frank kings.

In 529, Clothaire, in concert with his brother Thierry, had invaded and subdued Thuringia with enormous slaughter. The victors divided between them the captives and the booty. Two children of the royal house, a girl of seven years and her brother, formed part of the share of Clothaire. Struck with the beauty and precocious intelligence of the little Radegonde, he ordered that she should be carefully maintained and educated at one of the royal manors on the Somme, designing, as soon as she should be old enough, to take her into the number of his

wives. Radegonde manifested extraordinary aptitude for learning, and by the permission of the king (whose treatment of his little prisoner displays almost the only traits of gentleness and humanity which are to be found in his history) she was instructed after the manner of the Gallo-Roman ladies of highest birth, joining to the accomplishments proper to her sex and station an acquaintance with the Latin poets and with the Fathers of the Christian Church. In these studies Radegonde, as she advanced beyond the age of childhood, found her chief solace and delight. The terrible scenes she had witnessed in her earliest years, the slaughter of her kindred and the devastation of her country, had made an indelible impression on her memory ; and she turned with loathing, rather than indifference, from the barbaric pomps and amusements of the Frank court, to muse over the lives of saints and martyrs, and wish that she, too, might devote herself, whether in life or death, a sacrifice on the altar of the faith.

When she was fifteen years old, Clothaire sent for her to make her his wife. Radegonde strove in vain to elude the fortune to which the king destined her. She took flight, but was overtaken and brought back to be conducted with due pomp to Soissons, where Clothaire publicly espoused her. Radegonde found little but misery in this forced union with a savage prince. She sought relief from her own sorrows in alleviating the sufferings of others ; and devoted all the time she could steal from the society of her husband and his companions to visit sick and destitute women, for whom she had provided an asylum, and to whom she gladly ministered with her own hands, shrinking from no service, however lowly or painful.

Six years had thus worn away, when Clothaire, who had retained Radegonde's brother near him as a hostage for the submission of his countrymen, irritated by some patriotic regrets or aspirations of the young man, caused him to be put to death. This was the last drop, and

Radegonde's cup of bitterness overflowed : her position, already odious, was henceforth intolerable to her. Pleading her need of religious guidance and consolation in her sorrow, she obtained the king's permission to visit Medard, the good bishop of Noyon. When the queen arrived at Noyon, the bishop was ministering in his church. She immediately repaired thither ; and no sooner found herself in his presence, than her distress, and the vehement longing to retire from the world, which she had concealed hitherto, found utterance in the bitter cry, "O holy priest, I would fain quit the world, and change this robe for the habit of a recluse. I beseech you, consecrate me to the Lord."

Surprised and alarmed at this abrupt unexpected request, Medard hesitated, and begged time to consider ; while the lords and warriors of Radegonde's escort, who had followed her to the church, thronged round him with threatening gestures, crying out, "At thy peril, priest, separate from the king a woman whom he has taken to be his wife !"

It was, in truth, a perilous service which was required of him ; to break a royal marriage contracted according to the law and customs of the Franks,—customs which, much as the Church abhorred them, she had thus far tolerated, lest she should altogether estrange the barbarians from Christian teaching. Radegonde and her women, terrified at the tumult, took refuge in the sacristy ; but when quietness was restored, she returned into the sanctuary, where Medard, whom the fierce soldiers had dragged down the steps of the altar into the nave of the church, sat sad and pensive, hesitating what he should do. She knelt down before him, and said solemnly, "If thou delayest to consecrate me, and fearest man more than God, thou wilt have to render account, and the Pastor will require of thee the soul of His sheep."

These words, with the singular earnestness and decision of the young princess, struck the bishop so forcibly, that he hesitated no longer. By his own authority he

pronounced her marriage with the king dissolved, and consecrated her deaconess by imposition of hands. Moved partly by her sorrow and her entreaties, partly by an undefined sense of awe for the rites of the Church, the Frank lords no longer insisted on her returning with them to the court; and Radegonde's first thought was to place herself beyond the danger of immediate recapture by flight. But first she placed on the altar all the precious things, the girdle of solid gold, the jewels and head ornaments which, according to the custom of the times, she wore on her person: "All these," said she, "I give to the poor." Then, hastening to depart, she fled southwards, reached Orleans, embarked on the Loire, and descended the river to Tours, where she took sanctuary at the shrine of St. Martin. Through some of the bishops she made earnest suit to the king that he would consent to see her no more, and suffer her to fulfil her vow in peace; and in much fear, with fasting and continual prayer, she waited to hear his decision. Clothaire was enraged at first, and set out to bring back the fugitive himself; at which alarming news Radegonde fled from the sanctuary of St. Martin to the no less revered asylum of St. Hilary, at Poitiers. Before the king reached Poitiers, the remonstrances and entreaties of Germain, the bishop of Paris, prevailed with him to allow his Thuringian wife the freedom for which she prayed. More than this, he permitted her to found a convent at Poitiers, after the pattern of one which a noble Gallo-Roman matron had established at Arles half a century before; and to bestow on this work all the property with which he had endowed her at the time of her marriage.

Defended by walls and towers against the violence of those lawless days, but enclosing within its precincts the buildings and gardens suited to a life of industrious peace, which was not designed to exclude a liberal attention to the claims of hospitality and charity, the longed-for asylum of Radegonde arose without the gates of Poitiers; and the day on which she took possession of it was a

festival for the inhabitants of that country. Attracted by the fame of her learning and piety, her benevolent sympathy, and her high rank, many young maidens had joined themselves to her, chiefly the daughters of noble Gallo-Roman families, who had tasted like herself of the woes of war and conquest. To these Radegonde became a mother. Study, devotion, and charity were the rule and the work of the community which she had founded, but no innocent recreations were excluded. Daily Radegonde herself instructed her young companions in the Scriptures, but she resigned to other hands the authority of abbess, and shared in all the labours of her household. Personages of distinction, lay and ecclesiastic, visited her convent, and were hospitably welcomed there; most of all, learned men, and those whose discourse breathed sentiments of peace and charity. Sorrowful and bereaved women, desolate orphans, found there an asylum and a comforter. Many years rolled on, and fratricidal wars rent the land, but the house of Radegonde stood unmolested, "an ark of peace," said the people, "amidst the storms." She survived till the year 589, and went down to the grave greatly honoured, as an example of piety without austerity, and of tender sympathy and consideration for others, blended with habitual denial of self.



## CHAPTER VII.

Part I.—Second Partition of the Frank Empire : Civil Wars.—Frédégonde and Brunehild : Columban.—Clothaire II. sole king : Council of Paris (615). Part II.—Dagobert.—Salic Law.—The *Fainéant* or *Do-nothing* Kings.—Mayors of the Palace.—Pepin of Heristal.

FROM 561 A.D. TO 714.

*Part I.*—The Frank empire was again partitioned among the surviving sons of Clothaire. Gontran had Burgundy, including Savoy, Switzerland, &c. The wide expanse of country between the Rhine and the Loire was divided in two by an imaginary line, drawn from the environs of Langres, near the sources of the Saône, to the mouths of the Scheldt. All on the east of this line was called Austrasia, all on the west Neustria. Sigebert had Austrasia, and with it all the territories which the Franks had acquired to the east of the Rhine. Chilperic had Neustria. Aquitaine and the remainder of South Gaul were divided between the three brothers.\* This partition of the empire was finally concluded in the year 567 ; and now began a succession of treacheries, murders, and domestic wars, the like of which is not to be found in the

\* A fourth brother, Caribert, who died in 567, had also had a share of the empire : his capital was Paris. Though not otherwise distinguished, Caribert possesses some interest for an English reader, as the father of Bertha, the Christian wife of Ethelbert, king of Kent, who was afterwards converted by Augustine. Bertha's marriage took place in 570. The city of Poitiers had formed part of her father's dominions, and it may be that Bertha's Christian character owed something to the influence of Radegonde. There was little or nothing in her father's court to induce sentiments of piety.



history of any other European country. Gontran, as being the least cruel of the three brothers, was surnamed *The Good*, though little entitled to the name. Sigebert and Chilperic distinguished themselves by their unnatural hatred of one another. But their wives, Brunehild and Frédégonde, surpassed their husbands in crime, even as they excelled them in ability. Frédégonde was the third wife of Chilperic, who began the series of domestic murders by putting to death her predecessor, a gentle and virtuous princess, the sister of Brunehild. At the instigation of Frédégonde, he also destroyed all the children of his first marriage. In the war which raged between Sigebert and Chilperic, the latter was overcome. He was in danger of losing both kingdom and life, but Frédégonde hired assassins to murder Sigebert; and eventually disposed of Chilperic himself in the same way. She had contrived to win partisans and supporters among the chief men of Neustria, and governed the kingdom herself in the name of her young son, Clothaire II.

Brunehild also, since the death of her husband Sigebert, had been governing Austrasia, first as the guardian, and then as the chief counsellor and director of her son Childebert. In 593, Gontran king of Burgundy died, leaving his dominions to Childebert. So great an accession of wealth, population, and territory, inclined Brunehild to think the time favourable for attacking the king of Neustria and his mother. At her instigation, Childebert declared war. But when the armies encountered each other, the Austrasians were seized with a sudden panic at the sight of what they conceived to be a wood moving towards them. The Neustrians, much less numerous than their antagonists, had been directed to veil the inferiority of their force as long as possible :—

Let every soldier hew him down a bough  
And bear 't before him : thereby shall we shadow  
The numbers of our host, and make discovery  
Err in respect of us.

The mistake was fatal to the Austrasians, who fled from

the field in confusion. Childebert made peace with Neustria, and died soon afterwards (596), leaving two young sons ; one of whom became king of Burgundy, the other of Austrasia, under the guardianship of their grandmother Brunehild.

The implacable hatred of Brunehild and Frédégonde soon rekindled hostilities, in which Neustria again triumphed : and Frédégonde died, leaving her son firmly established in his dominions. By poison or the sword she had removed out of her way almost every one who opposed her. Even the sacred character of the bishop of Rouen could not save him ; he ventured to reprove her crimes, and she caused him to be murdered on the very steps of the altar.

Meanwhile Brunehild, by her endeavours to extend and strengthen the royal authority, was exciting the indignation of the Austrasian nobles. They threatened her life, and the queen fled to Burgundy, where she had sufficient influence to promote a fresh war with Neustria, in which the Burgundians had the advantage. Brunehild next incited her two grandsons to go to war with each other ; a war which lasted several years, and was ended at last by a battle, attended with horrible slaughter, on the field of Tolbiac (or Zulpich) (A.D. 611). One brother was taken prisoner and murdered, together with his family, by the other, who died himself a year afterwards, leaving four little sons to inherit his dominions. Brunehild, however, desirous to avoid the partition of the kingdoms, endeavoured to procure the crown of both for the eldest of the princes, and to reign herself under his name, as she had done under that of his father and grandfather.

But it was too late. The nobles of Burgundy and Austrasia, implacably offended by her persevering attempts to diminish and restrain their power, had conspired together to yield up both kingdoms to Clothaire, king of Neustria. Clothaire caused the little king and one of his brothers to be put to death ; the others were banished. Brunehild herself fell into the hands of the son of Frédégonde, who revenged himself on the enemy of his house

in a manner worthy of his mother. The aged queen, daughter, sister, wife, and mother of kings, was abandoned for three days to the mercy of the executioners and the insults of the soldiery, and was then attached, still breathing, to the tail of a wild horse, and dashed in pieces. She had been forty-eight years the terror of her enemies, and fell at last not so much through the horror excited by her crimes as by the resentment which her endeavours to enlarge and strengthen the authority of the Crown awakened in the bosoms of the Frank nobles.

Brunehild (or *Brunehaut*) was a Visigoth princess of Spain. At her father's court she had learned to admire the Roman customs, laws, and learning. She strove to encourage the arts, repaired the old Roman roads, and restored some beautiful monuments of antiquity. She also built a great number of churches and monasteries, and bestowed immense sums on the clergy. Yet when some righteous priests rebuked the gross licentiousness which disgraced her life and court, she caused one of them to be stoned to death; and banished the saintly Irish missionary Columban from her grandson's dominions because he boldly admonished the young king to repent and amend his evil life.

Columban had founded an oratory amidst the ruins of an old Roman fortress near the baths of Luxueil. Accompanied by a few companions, he preached the Gospel in the east of Gaul during many years. His works of charity and the purity of his life had won the reverence of the people, who came forth with tears and prayers to beg his blessing while the soldiers of Brunehild were conducting him forth to the frontiers of the kingdom.

But the genius of Brunehild, her endeavours to promote a revival of civilization, and her great benefactions to the Church, veiled her crimes from the eyes of her contemporaries at a distance. It was to this queen and her royal grandsons that Gregory the Great addressed (about the year 596) letters requesting their good offices for the missionaries whom he was sending to England.

“ You ” (he writes to Brunehild) “ whose zeal is so ardent, whose works are so pious, whose excellent soul is so strong in the fear of the Almighty God, we pray you to aid us in a great work, &c. ; ” and Brunehild welcomed the mission and defrayed its expenses on its way towards the sea. Her conduct in this respect was imitated by King Clothaire in Neustria, who also received the missionaries with favour, and sent with them some of his people who understood the language of the English to act as interpreters.

A.D. 613.—Once more the empire of the Franks was united under a single head, Clothaire II. But Clothaire soon discovered that the unity was more apparent than real. The nobles of Austrasia had designed their own elevation, not his, when they surrendered to him Brunehild and her great-grandsons. They chose to have a king residing amongst them, whom they might render subservient to their will, and forced Clothaire to share the throne with his son Dagobert. Dagobert was still but a child in years when he was sent to reign in Austrasia. He was placed under the guardianship of Arnulf, bishop of Metz, and Pepin of Landen, two of the most powerful nobles of the kingdom. By the marriage of Arnulf’s son with the daughter of Pepin, these two lords became ancestors of the second or Carlovingian dynasty of Frank kings ; but the Merovingian family was to retain the royal dignity, at least in name, for upwards of a century yet. Dagobert was the last of their line who could be said really to rule. At his father’s death, in 628, he became sole king of the Frank empire.

The reign of Clothaire II. is chiefly remarkable for the council or synod held at Paris in 615. Amidst the chaos, to which the Frank conquest, and the perpetual wars which the conquerors waged among themselves had reduced Gaul, the Church alone had preserved some ideas of public order and regular government. Generally speaking, the barbaric kings entertained some reverence for the bishops, and the chiefs of the Church united them-

selves on several occasions with the lay lords to impose a check on the stupid or savage tyranny of the Merovingian kings. During the sixth century they had held numerous councils : and in this synod of 615, seventy bishops sat together with the great lords of the kingdom, and promulgated an edict which was sanctioned by the king, and which marks an epoch in the history of the country.

By this edict, the direct taxes which Chilperic, Frédégonde, and Brunehild had imposed were abolished, while the tolls payable on the great roads, and the duties imposed on the entry of goods into the cities, were confirmed ; and it was declared unlawful for the king to establish any new tax. The king was forbidden henceforward to seize the property of persons who died intestate ; or to force rich widows or orphan maidens to marry against their will, that he might be enriched out of their goods. It was decreed that all the benefices of which the Crown had deprived the leudes during the late wars and troubles should be restored to them : that henceforward the count and chief judge of any city and territory should always be selected amongst the principal landowners of the district which he was to govern ; an enactment which greatly increased the power of the aristocracy at the expense of that of the kings. Finally, the election of bishops was reserved wholly to the clergy and laity of the several dioceses, the king having only the right of confirming their choice ; and the entire independence of the ecclesiastical courts was established, no person in orders being henceforward permitted to appeal from their sentences to the Crown.

*Part II.*—The reign of Dagobert presents a strange picture of mingled good and evil. He was a prince of great ability and activity, bent on repressing the factiousness of the nobles, whom he constrained to obedience by the severity of his rule, while he favoured the Gallo-Roman population over whom they tyrannized. He caused the laws of the Franks to be revised, and reduced

to writing; and carefully collected also the laws of the German nations who were tributary to him.

And this seems a suitable place to repeat more particularly (what has already been slightly mentioned by the way), that an article of the *Salic* or *Salian* code enacted that no woman should inherit the lands for which the possessor owed military service. Ages afterwards, we shall find this law declared applicable in respect of the kingdom of France.

No king of his race displayed so much magnificence as Dagobert. His court was filled with bishops, leudes, and ambassadors from foreign powers. Silk, gold, and precious stones adorned his palaces. The rare and valuable productions of the East were abundantly brought into his kingdom by the caravans of Frank merchants, who passed and repassed freely between Gaul and Constantinople by way of the valley of the Danube, until a tribe of Wends, who had taken possession of that country, began to attack and plunder them. Dagobert demanded satisfaction, and not being able to obtain it, summoned all his subjects and allies to the war. A multitude of warriors obeyed the call, and marched in pursuit of the Wends, but only to perish miserably by hunger and sickness in vast uncultivated wildernesses. The disaster was so great that the power of the Franks was shaken by it all through South Germany.

Thenceforward Dagobert indulged no dreams of foreign conquest. He displayed great zeal in church-building, and care for the due splendour of divine worship; and was wont to sing himself on festival days in the choir of the abbey church of St. Denis, of which he laid the foundation, and decorated the interior with great store of gold and precious stones; and in the crypt of which he and most of his successors for eleven centuries were interred. The pomp and luxury with which Dagobert loved to surround himself almost equalled those of the sovereigns of the East; and in the latter years of his reign his manner of life too closely resembled theirs.



His wives and concubines were without number. He sank into indolence and intemperance, neglected to do justice, and (notwithstanding the edict of 615) began to burden his subjects with heavy tributes. Though not in general remarkable for cruelty, Dagobert was guilty of horrible barbarity and treachery towards the Bulgarians. This people, dislodged by the Huns from their ancient seats, and driven westward, had found a resting-place in Bavaria, and were permitted by Dagobert to settle there. But afterwards, becoming afraid that the refugees might grow too powerful and assert their independence, he ordered them all to be put to the sword ; and ten thousand families were massacred.

Yet this king esteemed virtue and charity in other men, and refused not to give them the means of doing good which he left undone himself. St. Eloi (or *Eligius*), who was first his goldsmith and treasurer, and afterwards became a priest and zealous missionary bishop of Noyon, and St. Owen, a convert of Eloi, enjoyed the highest confidence of Dagobert. Of Eloi, who was remarkable for the munificence with which he bestowed all his goods in succouring the afflicted, redeeming slaves out of bondage, and other like works of mercy, we are told that the king seldom denied him any request.

Dagobert died in his thirty-sixth year, A.D. 638 ; and all the ability and energy of the family of Meroveus seemed to die with him. During the next one hundred and fourteen years a succession of royal puppets occupied the throne, sometimes one alone, sometimes two, having the empire divided between them ; but all alike insignificant, and bearing no other title in history than that of “ *Rois fainéants* ”—the *Lazy*, or *Do-nothing*, *Kings*.

While these imbecile princes led a life of indolent or vicious indulgence in the retirement of the palace, a minister, bearing the title of Mayor of the Palace, discharged the duties of government.

*Mayors of the Palace* had originally been established to preserve order in the royal household and amongst the



leudes and warriors who frequented the court ; but the power and authority which they exercised had been gradually on the increase during the long minority of several of the kings. From the period of Dagobert's death they assumed the command of the armies, made war and peace, and exercised every other kingly right, without even consulting the inclination of the nominal sovereign.

At first, the kings themselves had chosen whomsoever they pleased to be mayor of the palace. During the infancy of some of their kings the nobles had assumed the right of choice ; until the mayors became so powerful that they could transmit their post to their sons, and the office of mayor of the palace, like that of king, became hereditary. Pepin of Heristal, the grandson of Pepin of Landen and of Bishop Arnulf of Metz, surpassed both in genius and authority all the mayors who had preceded him, and became the real head of all government, civil and military, in the whole Frank empire. His power was, however, exercised with the acquiescence of the chief nobles, and with a strict adherence to the ancient national customs. Each year the great national assembly of the Champ de Mars was duly summoned by Pepin, and the royal effigy who nominally occupied the throne was conducted to the place of meeting with such a degree of state and attendance as fully satisfied the popular veneration for the scion of the house of Meroveus. Clad in his royal robes, his long hair, token of divine descent, flowing over his shoulders, he took his seat on the throne prepared for him ; gave audience to the ambassadors of foreign princes, returned the answers which Pepin had duly dictated to him beforehand, and pronounced a few words respecting war and peace, and the duties of the government. Then he returned as he had come, in the curtained waggon drawn by oxen, which formed the state carriage of those days, and surrounded by a numerous escort of guards and attendants, who served the double purpose of ministering to his wishes and his safety, and of preventing him from passing beyond the precincts of his palace.

Pepin of Heristal died in 714, having been virtually head of the Frank empire for twenty-seven years. The German nations who had long before become allies or tributaries of the Frank kings, but who were at best but unquiet neighbours, refused to own the supremacy either of the nominal kings or of their able minister ; and Pepin had to sustain continual wars on the frontier with the Saxons, Frisons, Allemanni, and others. Aquitaine also endeavoured to render itself independent, under its duke Eudes (or *Odo*), who was descended from a younger brother of King Dagobert.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Antagonism of Neustria and Austrasia.—Charles Martel.—Mussulman Invasion; Battle of Poitiers, A.D. 732.—Pepin the Short.—Mission of St. Boniface.—Pepin assumes the Crown.—Close of the Merovingian Dynasty, A.D. 752.

FROM 714 A.D. TO 752.

PEPIN of Heristal bequeathed his office to his grandson, a child only five years old, desiring that his widow, Plectrude, might be the boy's guardian, and train him up for the due exercise of authority, which in the meantime was to remain in her hands.

But the Neustrians, who had never been very cordially united with the Austrasians, thought the occasion favourable for separating themselves altogether, and with the help of the Frisons and Saxons, made war on Austrasia. The Austrasians quickly abandoned Plectrude and her ward. They needed a leader and general, and they found him in the person of Charles, the illegitimate son of Pepin, but endued with all his father's genius. Several years were occupied in repelling the invasions of his German neighbours, and in overcoming the Neustrians and the people of Aquitaine. A strong feeling of national jealousy had always divided the Neustrians and the people of Austrasia, even when outwardly united. The former were chiefly Salian, the latter Riparian Franks. The Neustrians, by their long settlement in the heart of Gaul, had lost in some measure their ancient warlike character. The Austrasians, on the contrary, occupying the eastern provinces, were frequently called upon to defend their borders from the incursions of the neighbouring nations; their numbers were recruited from time to time by warriors

of kindred race ; and thus they were inured to war from their youth, and retained to the full the martial energy of their forefathers. The struggle between the Eastern and Western Franks was carried on with great obstinacy, and cost much bloodshed. In the end, Austrasia triumphed, and in two great battles Charles broke the power of Neustria.

He next turned his arms against Aquitaine, which had given the title of king to Eudes, and persisted in asserting its independence of Frank supremacy. Meanwhile, an enemy was approaching Gaul whose invasion threatened worse evils than any which had befallen the land since the Franks had brought it under their dominion. The Saracens, under Musa, governor of Egypt, and Tarik, his general, had conquered all Spain, a valiant remnant of Goths only excepted, who maintained their independence in the rugged mountains of Asturias. The conquerors took possession of Narbonne and all the country lying east of Aquitaine, between the Pyrenees and the Rhone, as being a portion of the old Gothic dominion. From thence they menaced Aquitaine. Eudes defeated one army, and slew its leader, under the walls of Toulouse. A second appeared, commanded by the valiant Abd-el-Rahman, who reduced all the country between the Garonne and the Rhone, slaughtered the army of Eudes, and fired the city of Bordeaux.

Eudes no longer hoped to maintain his independence. Forced to acknowledge either a Mussulman or a Christian as his superior lord, he fled to Charles, owned that he held his dukedom as a dependency of the Frank crown, and implored aid against the Mussulman invaders. Already Abd-el-Rahman was meditating the conquest of the whole Frank empire, and squadrons of Arab cavalry were seen from the walls of Tours. Charles summoned to the fight all the warriors of Gaul and western Germany, and the hosts of the Saracen and the Christian met in the plains of Poitiers, October, 732. Six days were consumed in partial encounters over a battle-field which, according

to the traditions of the time, extended from the environs of Poitiers to the banks of the Loire. On the seventh day, the Saracens put forth all their strength, and rushed like a whirlwind on the Frank warriors, who stood massed together, firm, close, and unyielding as a wall of iron; until Eudes, with the force under his command, turned the rear of the enemy, and fired his camp. This was the signal for the Franks to advance. Abd-el-Rahman and the flower of his host fell before them; but the battle raged till nightfall, and the broken remnant of the Saracen army escaped under cover of the darkness. Distracted by the death of their leader, they fell into disunion, evacuated Aquitaine, and returned to it no more.

The battle of Poitiers, like that of Châlons, fought 281 years before, is accounted one of the great battles of the world; the first saved Europe from the rule of the Tartar, the last from the yoke of Mahomet.

The vigour which Charles displayed in the combat, and the crushing blow which the defeat at Poitiers inflicted on the Saracens, won for him the surname of *Martel* (the *Hammer*), by which he has ever since been known in history. He followed up his victory by the capture of Arles and Marseilles, and expelled the Saracens from all the places of which they had taken possession between the Pyrenees and the Rhone.

But it was easier for the Frank chief to lead his soldiers to victory than to restrain the ferocious violence with which they ravaged the lands both of friend and foe. Pillage, burning, and bloodshed marked their progress through the rich provinces of the south, and greatly embittered the dread and hatred with which the more civilized inhabitants of Aquitaine and Provence had ever regarded the barbarian lords and conquerors of northern Gaul.

Charles Martel himself possessed a genius capable of far more than martial achievements. He aimed at uniting all the diverse races which composed the Frank confederacy into one powerful, closely-knit empire. In

the pursuit of this object he anticipated the invasions with which Gaul was threatened by the German nations who hung upon her frontiers, attacked them in their own fastnesses, and carried war year after year among the Saxons and their allies, from the mouths of the Elbe to those of the Oder.

His name was held in high honour by the most powerful Christian princes of his time ; by Luitprand, the wise king of Lombardy ; by the emperor of the East, Leo the Isaurian ; by the antagonist of both, Pope Gregory III. Yet Charles Martel was not in high estimation with the clergy of Gaul. During the war with the Saracens he had partly maintained his army out of the revenues of the Church, and he had rewarded some of his favourite warriors with the gift of rich ecclesiastical benefices. This was esteemed too great a sacrilege to be atoned for, even by the eminent service which Charles had rendered to Christendom ; and the monastic legends of that age depicted the great Frank chief after his death in a state of penal suffering which could never have an end.

Charles Martel died in 741, leaving his authority to his sons, Pepin and Carloman. He had instituted a new kind of *benefices*, rendering them hereditary under the name of *fiefs*, and on condition of doing homage to the sovereign ; the new beneficiaries were called *vassals*.

Carloman, the younger son of Charles Martel, soon retired from the cares of government, and in 747 entered the famous Benedictine monastery of Monte Casino, where he ended his days.

Pepin, surnamed the Short,\* to distinguish him from

\* Though diminutive in stature, Pepin was a giant in strength and daring. Combats of wild animals were among the diversions of the Frank court. A favourite tradition relates that Pepin, being present on one occasion when a lion was fighting with a bull, said to the lords who were looking on, "Which of you dares to part them ?" No one answered ; and Pepin, springing into the arena, struck off the heads of both. "Say now," he asked of the lords "am I worthy to be your king ?"



his grandfather, Pepin of Heristal, trod in the steps of his predecessors, exercising the power of a sovereign under the modest name of Mayor of the Palace, while he yearly exhibited for the homage of the Franks the phantom of a Merovingian king. But Pepin strengthened his position by cultivating the closest alliance and friendship with the Church; assigning to the bishops and clergy the highest rank and authority in the national assemblies, and making every possible amends for the loss which they had sustained at the hands of his father.

The support which he extended to the devoted men who were trying to Christianize Germany deserves honourable mention. In 715, Winfried, a noble Englishman, better known to after-times by the name of Boniface, had gone forth as a missionary to the pagan nations of Germany. He laboured with great zeal and success, and being joined from time to time by other English priests, carried the light of the Gospel into Hesse, Thuringia, Bavaria, and other neighbouring regions. In 732, Boniface was made archbishop of Mentz. In this capacity he presided over the Church in Germany for many years, upheld in his labours for the spread of Christianity by Charles Martel and Pepin his son. To Pepin in his latter days he earnestly commended the missionaries whom he was about to leave behind him.\*

After governing for ten years as minister of the im-

\* Believing that his death drew nigh, Boniface made choice of his countryman and fellow-labourer Lullus to succeed him in the archbishopric, and went forth into Friesland to end his missionary work in the country where he had begun it. Many pagans in that land were brought into the pale of the Church. Boniface appointed a day to confirm those whom he had baptized, and encamped in the plain of Dockum to wait for their arrival. In the meantime, a multitude of pagans came to that place, and, falling furiously on Boniface and his companions, fifty-two in number, killed them all (A.D. 755). Some of the Christians would have resisted, but Boniface said, "Children, forbear to fight; the Scripture forbids us to render evil for evil. The day which I have long waited for is come: hope in God, and He will save your souls."



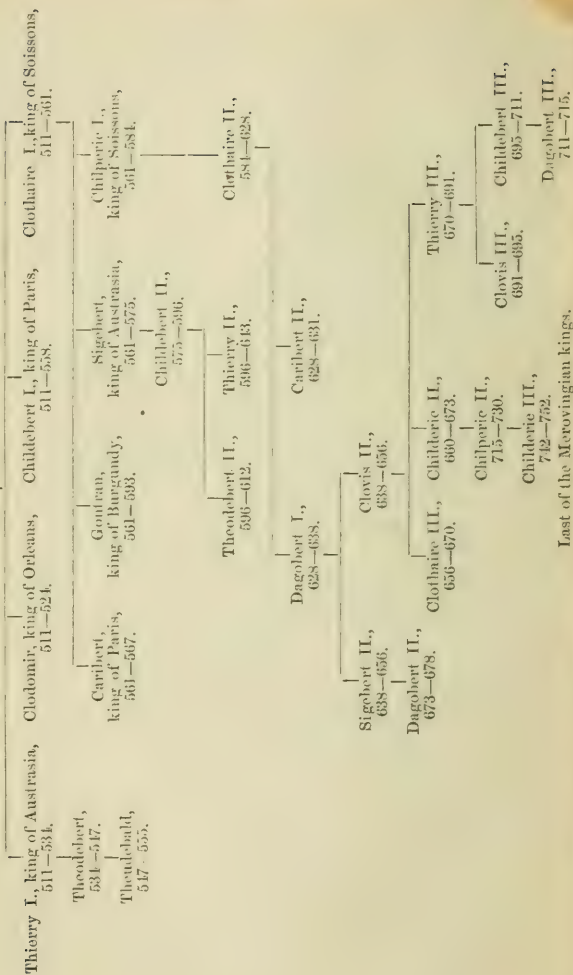
becile Childeric III., Pepin desired to become in name, as he already was in power, the king. To Zachary, the Pope of that day, he proposed the question, "Whether the Divine law did not permit a valiant people to dethrone a pusillanimous and indolent monarch who was incapable of discharging the functions of royalty, and to choose in his stead one more worthy of rule, and who had already rendered important services to the State?" Zachary replied that the title of king rightly belonged to him who discharged the duties of the sovereign. In the national assembly which met immediately afterwards at Soissons, Pepin was proclaimed king of the Franks, according to their ancient manner of election; and Childeric was deposed, and sent to end his days in a monastery. Thus came to its end the Merovingian dynasty, founded by Clovis 266 years before.

It is worthy of remark, that the question concerning the Frank crown referred by Pepin to Zachary, was the first instance of an appeal to the Pope concerning the right of temporal sovereignty.

To confirm his election by the most venerable sanction, Pepin was solemnly anointed and crowned king, at Soissons, by Archbishop Boniface. It was both an effect and a token of the decided preponderance of the Austrasian Franks, that the seat of government had now for a long while been transferred to the east. Metz, Soissons, and, under the greatest of the Carlovingians, Aix-la-Chapelle, became the chosen capitals of the empire.

## A GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS.

CLOVIS, 481—511.



## CHAPTER IX.

Wars of Pepin's Reign.—Donation of Territory which lays the Foundation of the Temporal Power of the Papacy (754-5).—Death of Pepin, and Division of the Empire between his sons (768).—Death of Carloman (770).—Charlemagne sole King.—His Character and Endowments.—His Wars with the Saxons.—Conquest of the Kingdom of Lombardy (776).

FROM A.D. 752 TO 777.

As mayor of the palace, Pepin had been engaged in continual wars, against the Allemanni, the Saxons, Bavarians, and others. His reign was of the same war-like character as his previous government. The Saracens on the south and the Saxons on the north menaced the frontiers of the kingdom, and could only be kept in check by repeated repulses. Within the limits of Gaul itself war was maintained with equal obstinacy. The Bretons, never willingly subject to princes of a foreign race, refused to acknowledge the authority of the new monarch; and much blood was shed before their resistance could be overcome. A fiercer and more prolonged contest was carried on by the people of Aquitaine, who were no sooner delivered from the terror of a Saracen invasion than the national antipathy to the Franks burst out in full force.

Eudes was dead; his son Hunald had abdicated the dukedom to place it in the hands of his son Guaifer or Waifer, who kept the peace for a time, gathering meanwhile all his forces for a decisive struggle. But about the year 759, Pepin, who had finally driven the Saracens over the Pyrenees, retaking Narbonne and all the adjoining country out of their hands, turned with all his strength against Aquitaine. The hostilities which followed lasted

for several years, and the ruin and desolation which they occasioned exceeded the common ravages of war. The Franks carried fire and sword through Berri, Auvergne, and the Limousin, and Guaifer retaliated frightfully on the territories beyond the frontier of Aquitaine. But Pepin having taken possession of Clermont, Bourges, and other principal cities, he gave up the contest in despair. He was killed shortly afterwards by some of his own people, and the great duchy of Aquitaine was united to the crown. Only in the south-western portion of it, which had now taken the name of Gascony, Wolf, the son of Guaifer, was suffered to retain a portion of his father's authority, with the title of Duke.

These wars concerned only the nations under the rule of Pepin, and their immediate neighbours. But his expedition against the Lombards, undertaken at the solicitation of the Pope, had consequences which affected all Christendom, since it resulted in that famous donation of territory which laid the foundation of the temporal power of the Papacy.

The Lombard kings had gradually possessed themselves of those portions of Italy which had remained longest attached to the emperors of the East, and which were comprised under the name of the Exarchate of Ravenna.\* Ataulph (or *Astolfo*), who had ascended the throne of Lombardy in 749, was meditating the extension of his dominion to the whole peninsula. The Pope, Stephen III., crossed the Alps and appeared in person at the Frank court to solicit assistance and protection. It was readily given. Pepin led a numerous army into Italy, overthrew the Lombards, and in a second campaign wrested the Exarchate out of their hands. He might either have restored this valuable spoil to the throne of Constantinople

\* The strict limits of the Exarchate were included in the territories of Ravenna, Bologna, and Ferrara; dependent on it was the Pentapclis, which extended along the Adriatic from Rimini to Ancona, and advanced into the interior as far as the ridges of the Apennines.

with great praise of justice ; or he might have retained permanent possession of it himself, without reproach, and with much profit : he did neither ; but foreseeing the advantage of an intimate alliance with the see of Rome, he transferred the sovereignty of the Exarchate to the Pope, A.D. 754-5.

With his own hands Stephen had already crowned Pepin afresh, and his two sons with him ; and, to give all possible sanction to the claims of the new dynasty, had solemnly conjured the Franks, on pain of excommunication, never to choose a sovereign from another line.

In 768, Pepin died, having previously assembled the chief men of the nation, and with their advice and consent divided the empire between his two sons ; giving the east to Carloman, and the west to Charles.

The first care of the two brothers was to conduct a joint expedition against Aquitaine, which had again broken out into open revolt ; but was now once more brought into subjection. Carloman did not second his brother very heartily in this war ; and from this, or other causes, dissensions arose between them, which threatened to disturb the peace of the empire. The early death of Carloman (770 A.D.) put an end to these discords, and united both kingdoms under the sway of Charles, surnamed *Magnus* or *The Great*, and who is known to posterity only as Charlemagne. Charles, who was born at the castle of Salzburg in Bavaria, the year after the death of that famous grandfather whose name he bore, had been cherished with singular pride and fondness by Pepin, who caused his little son, while yet an infant, to accompany him in his warlike expeditions, borne on men's shoulders in a buckler by way of cradle.

Thus associated from childhood in his father's campaigns, and admitted in early youth to a knowledge of his designs, he had grown up an accomplished soldier, practised in all the hardy exercises for which the camp was the best school ; but endued also with a mind which already revolved plans of government, and was preparing to con-

ceive schemes of empire, projects of universal law, order, and civilization, too vast to be executed even by the genius of Charlemagne. Yet he effected much; and though we may not say that his measures were always carried out with due regard to justice and mercy, it is not the less true, that "alone among the heroes of former ages his name enjoys a kind of double immortality—the one the deliberate award of history; the other the prodigal gift of fiction and romance."

The writers who narrate from personal knowledge the history of his reign, present him in a variety of characters, all of which he filled by turns: he is a warrior, sweeping over Europe with such rapidity of movement and such sternness of purpose that no power ever provoked his resentment without sinking under his blows: a legislator, issuing laws for an empire which reached from the Elbe to the Ebro, and from the British Channel to Hungary and the Adriatic Sea: an eager student, seeking knowledge at the lips of the most learned scholars of the age; dictating (for even Charlemagne could not *write*) a Latin epitaph for his friend, urging the youth of his court to diligent study in the school he had established for them in his own palace; spending his last days in procuring the most correct versions of Holy Writ. Or again, he appears as the companion, mirthful and humorous, finding a fund of amusement in the drolleries of daily life, and adding to them not a little by practical jokes of his own.

His endowments of person were as remarkable as those of his mind. "His lofty stature, his open countenance, his large and brilliant eyes, the dome-like structure of his head, imparted to all his movements the dignity of a king. . . . Almost to the close of his life he was a stranger to every form of bodily disease; and at seventy years of age he followed the chase and provoked his companions to emulate his feats in swimming, as though the iron frame which had endured more than fifty campaigns had been incapable of lassitude and exempt from decay."

Of all the nations who waged war with Charlemagne,



the Saxons offered the longest and fiercest resistance. Like his father and grandfather, while he endeavoured to subjugate these indomitable idolaters by the sword, he viewed with favour the labours of the faithful men who were striving to win them to the more merciful and righteous yoke of the Redeemer. It was evident that there could be no lasting peace with the Saxons till they had received Christianity, since their very religion enjoined on them the love of war and slaughter as the most honourable distinction of mankind. Policy and humanity, the danger to which his own dominions were continually exposed by their incursions, and the love of power and empire which swayed his mind, alike urged Charlemagne to persevere in the contest, till he had either won the obedience of his barbarian foes or crushed their power to resist him.

The Saxon confederacy, which extended over the countries since called Westphalia, Hanover, Mecklenburg, Prussian Saxony, and a considerable part of Holland, was composed of a number of small principalities or republics, often at strife with each other, but unanimous in resisting the common foe ; and united likewise by the annual meeting of all the tribes on the banks of the Weser, to deliberate on the affairs of the nation, and offer joint sacrifices to their gods. In 770, Liefwyn, one of the English missionaries who were striving to evangelize the Saxons, ventured to appear before the assembly of the tribes while they were sacrificing, and earnestly exhorted them to turn from those vanities to the living God. His zeal had well nigh cost him his life ; but Buto, a chief on whom either the words or the daring faithfulness of Liefwyn had made a favourable impression, remonstrated so effectually in his behalf that he was suffered at last to depart in safety. After the dispersion of the assembly, however, a body of Saxons marching far towards the south-west, came upon a congregation of Christians worshipping in the church at Deventer, and setting fire to the building, consumed it with all whom it contained.

Charlemagne heard it, and immediately marched an army into the Saxon territory, took and destroyed the strongest of their holds, and put a great multitude to the sword.

Witikind, a Saxon chief who united to the daring courage he possessed in common with his brethren, far greater foresight and prudence than was generally to be found amongst his countrymen, maintained the struggle with unflinching constancy, notwithstanding terrible defeats at Detmold, Buckholz, Osnabrück, &c. But the victor was gradually driving back his antagonists to the sea ; Witikind was forced to take refuge with Gottfried, king of Denmark ; and Charlemagne, in a great diet, or assize, held at Paderborn in 777, obliged the remaining chiefs to purchase peace by consenting to receive Christianity. He partitioned their country among bishops and abbots, assigning to each large territories. This was the origin of the ecclesiastical principalities of North Germany.

While pursuing the war with the Saxons, Charlemagne had also carried his arms into Italy (774 A.D.). Desiderius, duke of Tuscany, had succeeded Ataulph on the throne of Lombardy : he had seized some of the towns bestowed by Pepin on the Roman see, and was threatening further aggression, when the Pope, Adrian I., appealed to Charlemagne for assistance. There was also a private quarrel between the kings, for Charles had married the daughter of Desiderius, and repudiated her, and her father, incensed at the slight, had endeavoured to prevail on the Pope to unsettle the throne of the Frank monarch by crowning the sons of Carloman, whom he had entertained at his court since their father's death. It was Adrian's refusal to do this which had brought on him the enmity of the Lombard king.

Charlemagne responded immediately to the Pope's appeal, passed the Alps almost without opposition, and overran Lombardy ; Verona and Pavia alone offering any effectual resistance. After sustaining a siege of two years in Pavia, Desiderius was forced to surrender ; and

the kingdom of the Lombards (founded by Alboin, 568 A.D.) came to an end.

Leaving his troops to blockade Pavia, Charlemagne had already visited Rome, where he arrived on Easter-eve, and was received with great honour by Adrian. They repaired together to the Basilica of St. Peter, where the Pope acknowledged Charles as king of Italy, and "Patrician of Rome;" and Charles on his part renewed and confirmed the donation of territory made by his father to Adrian's predecessor.

After the surrender of Pavia, he assumed in that city the famous iron crown\* of Lombardy, and the territories of that kingdom, including Friuli, Tuscany, Spoleto, &c., became part of the great Frank monarchy.

\* So called because it contains an iron rim, said to be made of one of the nails from our Saviour's cross.

## CHAPTER X.

War with the Saracens.—Roland falls at Roncesvalles.—Renewal of the Saxon Wars.—Submission and Conversion of the Saxon Chief Witikind (785).—Foundation of Cities and Abbeys in the Saxon Territories.—Subjugation of the Avars.—Legislation of Charlemagne.—Yearly National Assemblies.—Charlemagne's Opposition to the Worship of Images.—His Protection of Pope Leo III.—Crowned Emperor of the Romans by Leo (A.D. 800).—Object aimed at by Charlemagne in the Revival of the Empire.

FROM 777 A.D. TO 800.

As soon as the retreat of Witikind and the apparent submission of his brother chiefs had brought to an end the Saxon war, Charlemagne turned himself against the Saracens. Civil wars had shaken their power in the Spanish peninsula. The emir of Saragossa, who was at the head of a faction which opposed the reigning caliph, solicited the aid of the Frank king; and Charlemagne willingly seized this opportunity of leading an expedition into Spain, in the hope of driving back the Mussulmans beyond the Ebro, and thereby destroying their power to foment insurrection within his own borders. This hope was but partially fulfilled. The emir and his party entirely failed to perform their engagements, and the Frank army arriving before Saragossa, into which they had been promised free entrance, found the gates shut and the city prepared for a siege, which it withstood successfully. Charlemagne brought Catalonia, as far as the mouth of the Ebro, under his dominion; he also took the city of Pampeluna in Navarre; but in the remainder of this province, as well as in North Aragon, the Saracen governors obeyed either the Christian king or the Mussul-

man caliph, as seemed most consonant with their interest or their fears.

A terrible disaster awaited the army on its homeward course. The duke of Gascony had been compelled to swear allegiance to the Frank crown, but his mountaineers cherished unquenchable hatred of a foreign yoke, and lay in wait in the recesses of the Pyrenees, watching for opportunities of harassing and attacking the strangers. The main body of the army had already passed through the valley of Roncesvalles, and the rear-guard, with whom were many of the most valiant chiefs and warriors, was threading its way in a long narrow line through the defile, when huge blocks of stone and fragments of rock were hurled by unseen hands from the heights above, crushing men and horses beneath their weight and blocking up the way against those who were following. In vain the chiefs strove to extricate the men under their command. Entangled among the mountains, where a handful of men could defend a pass against an army, every one of them perished. There fell Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, and warder of the Marches of Brittany. His name is known to history only by his death, but the romance writers of the middle ages have made him one of the most renowned heroes of chivalry; and still the peasant of the Pyrenees shows the stranger "The Breach of Roland," an enormous gap in the mountain-wall, 330 feet high, which he is fabled to have opened for his followers with one stroke of his sword.

Six subsequent expeditions despatched by Charlemagne under command of his sons kept the fierce borderers in check, and strengthened the Frank rule in the Spanish Marches, by which name the territories acquired south of the Pyrenees were distinguished. To insure the command of the road to the mountains, Charles built the town and fortress of Mont-de-Marsan, on a hill formerly sacred to Mars, at the confluence of the Midou and the Douze. And to guard the coasts from the Saracen pirates who infested the Mediterranean, he stationed

armed vessels in the ports of the Balearic islands, and of Corsica and Sardinia.

In the North, war was again raging fiercely with the Saxons, who had shaken off their enforced submission to the Frank yoke, and the Christian faith, as soon as they knew that Charlemagne was at a distance. Witikind reappeared amongst them, surprised and cut off a large body of troops, and defeated the king's lieutenants. But the fortune of the war was changed when Charles appeared in person, though the untameable barbarians persisted in the struggle, notwithstanding repeated defeats and immense slaughter. Despairing, apparently, of compassing their subjugation by milder means, Charlemagne put thousands of his prisoners to the sword, and transported many other thousands into distant provinces, where they were compelled to settle down as colonists under military supervision. Witikind owned himself vanquished at last, and in 785 consented to receive Christianity, with more sincerity, it would seem, than his brother chiefs had done. For although the Saxon revolts were not finally quelled until 804, he took no more part in them after his baptism, but lived quietly on his own lands until his death.\*

Charlemagne had employed the sword as a preparation for milder means of reducing the barbarians to the rank of a civilized nation. The cities, but especially the great abbeys which he founded at numerous points of the Saxon territory, proved so many centres of earthly and material as well as spiritual improvement and prosperity. From them the knowledge of agriculture and of all the useful arts spread abroad over the surface of the land ; and by degrees the multitude of the nation settled into comparative order and quietness, finding in those early times the yoke of the bishops and abbots much milder, and

\* The posterity of the Saxon hero survives to this day in the house of Oldenburg, which has given sovereigns to several northern kingdoms.



their protection not less efficacious, than that of the military chiefs.

There were other German people to be subjugated as well as the Saxons. Bavaria, though nominally subject, first to the Ostrogoths and afterwards to the Franks, had enjoyed a high degree of independence under the rule of dukes, elected by the people themselves from a family who had occupied the highest place among them for two hundred and fifty years. Tassilo, the reigning duke, was a son-in-law of the Lombard king whom Charlemagne had dethroned. Another Lombard kinsman ruled over a portion of South Italy, with the title of duke of Benevento. Desirous to enlarge his own power, and also to avenge the dethronement of his father-in-law, Tassilo allied himself with the duke of Benevento, and also with the Avars, a people who had migrated in the sixth century from the frontiers of China, and fixed themselves in the middle regions of the Danube. They were a race of horsemen and plunderers, who ranged far and wide in quest of booty, and had made the country subsequently called *Austria* a pasture-ground of stolen cattle and receptacle for spoil of every kind, of which they had stripped other countries. According to the plan concerted by Tassilo, the Avars were to throw themselves upon Friuli while he invaded Austrasia, and the Lombards of Benevento attacked the Frank possessions in Central Italy.

But Charlemagne obtained information of their plans, and left the confederates no time to put them in execution. Tassilo, surrounded by three armies at once, surrendered, and sued for mercy. His judges condemned him to death, but Charlemagne spared his life and sent him to a monastery. The duke of Benevento made his peace by acknowledging himself a vassal of the Frank crown. The Avars were driven back from Friuli, and attacked several years successively by Pepin, the son of Charlemagne, until they were thoroughly subdued. He took their vast intrenched camp, called the *Ring*, and found

there an incredible amount of wealth, the plunder of the East, insomuch that the Franks were greatly enriched by it.

The western portion of the country occupied by the Avars was made a military government, with the name of *Oester-reich* (whence *Austria*), or *Eastern Domain* of the Frank empire ; and by slow degrees this wild race became a settled and civilized people. Paulinus of Aquileia, whom Charlemagne greatly favoured, and other missionaries, laboured zealously to bring them to a knowledge of Christianity.

Besides all these wars there were other hostile expeditions against the barbarian nations who bordered on the northern and eastern frontiers ; and on the whole it cost Charlemagne forty years of almost continual warfare to consolidate and secure his vast empire. Yet his military operations, numerous and (for the most part) successful as they were, did not constitute the chief distinction of his reign, neither were they the work in which he chiefly delighted. It is in his character of legislator that this great monarch appears most superior to his age. The voluminous collection of laws which bears his name, and which includes enactments on all subjects of importance in Church or State, civil and military, penal and economical, testifies to the "exactness of the care with which he surveyed the whole compass of his administration, domestic as well as public, and also to the solicitude with which he endeavoured to reduce to one uniform system the most insignificant as well as the most important of the functions which he confided to the officers of his government."

Not that he endeavoured to make the laws of the various nations who obeyed him uniform. Such an attempt would have been resented as an intolerable tyranny. Franks, Gallo-Romans, Saxons, Lombards, all retained the laws of their forefathers. But Charlemagne endeavoured to complete them by additional enactments, suited to their altered circumstances ; and if some of the penalties by which he restrained the lately-conquered barbarians from returning to their habits of savage

violence, or to the rites of heathenism, were severe almost to cruelty, it may be alleged in excuse that more lenient legislation would have had no effect at all. And if severe in some respects, he was very merciful in others; for it ought not to be forgotten that, in an age when very little account was made of human life, and especially of the lives of the poor and lowly born, even when *free* men, that Charlemagne issued special orders that the destitute poor should be taken care of on the lands where they had lived and laboured, that there should be no needy persons wandering about begging their bread, and also that all possible care should be taken that no bondman even should perish of want.

In the endeavour to substitute order for anarchy, and to banish barbarism and idolatry by diffusing a knowledge of Christianity and of the useful arts through all parts of his vast empire, he was but partially successful; nor was it possible that he should wholly succeed. But it is his glory to have made the attempt, and so made it, that he changed the face of Central Europe.

Every spring, all the bishops, dukes, counts, and chief men of every degree, were summoned to the Champ de Mai. The men of highest rank in the Church or State were separated from the others, and formed a council before which Charlemagne laid all the new laws he proposed to make. They considered them carefully, and if they wished that the king should come and assist their deliberations, they sent to request his presence; and he, we are told, conversed with them familiarly, as a man with his friends. When the assembly had sufficiently considered all the king's proposals, and given in their opinions, the laws were made, and sent forth into all the empire. While the councillors were deliberating apart, the sovereign was receiving the other chief persons who had come to attend the Champ de Mai, inquiring kindly into the affairs of those whom he rarely saw, and questioning all the elders and principal men concerning the condition of the people in that part of the country from which each had come;

whether there was any distress or discontent, or danger of attack from any enemy, or any other mischief which required that he should interfere. And in the autumn, the great men of the council met again, that the king might advise with them concerning the government of the empire.

Some of the subjects which engaged the attention of Charlemagne and his wisest counsellors were of much more than temporary or partial interest. He strenuously opposed the decree of the second Council of Nicæa (held in 787), which established the worship of images. A council which met at Frankfort in 794, and deliberated under the eye of the king, entirely forbade image-worship, though it permitted that images should be retained in churches. So desirous was Charlemagne to discourage that idolatry, that he caused a treatise against it (divided into four books, and thence called *the Caroline books*) to be composed, and presented it to Pope Adrian. Adrian was really in favour of the decree of Nicæa ; but he concealed his opinion, and avoided pronouncing himself, that he might not displease his friend and protector. He died soon afterwards (795), much to the grief of Charlemagne, who composed for him a Latin epitaph, which was graven in letters of gold upon his tomb.\*

Adrian's successor, Leo III., was exposed to great danger a few years after his accession, through the conspiracy of certain priests, who raised the populace against him. Wounded and imprisoned, he escaped with difficulty out of their hands, and implored the protection of Charlemagne, who came to his help, and in November, 800, re-established him firmly on the pontifical throne. On the following Christmas-day, Leo requited this service by placing the imperial crown upon the head of his bene-

\* The following is an extract :—

“ Post patrem lacrymans, Carolus hæc carmina scripsi ;  
Te mihi, dulcis amor, te modo plango pater.  
Nomina jungo simul, titulis clarissima, nostra  
Adrianus, Carolus ; rex ego, tuque pater.”

factor, and hailing him *Cæsar*, and *Imperator semper Augustus* : and all the multitude of Rome cried out : " Life and victory to Charles, crowned of God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans ! "

From this time Charlemagne regarded himself as the true successor of the Roman emperors, and adopted the titles and ceremonial suitable to the imperial dignity. But it need hardly be said, it was not for the sake of an empty title or a gorgeous ceremonial that this sagacious prince aspired to revive the throne of the Cæsars. He had gathered into one empire many different and discordant nations. While he lived, the unsleeping vigilance which he exercised over every portion of his dominions, the terror of his arms, and the wisdom of his councils, sufficed to keep the fabric he had built up from falling to pieces. But he wanted to find some more lasting bond of union, some principle of cohesion powerful enough to hold his empire together when its founder should be in the dust. And he hoped he had found it in the revival of the empire of the West. For, long as it was since the last emperor had sat on the throne of the Cæsars, those ancient words of power, *Rome, Cæsar, Augustus*, still retained a hold on the imagination and the reverence of the nations, such as no other symbols of earthly dominion had ever possessed.

And it was no mere love of renown, or desire for the aggrandizement of his house, which actuated him. He wanted to insure the permanence of institutions adapted to cherish industry, and promote justice and charity ; to substitute the reign of law for the tyrannous rule of violence, and the light of the Gospel for the darkness of paganism. And the revival of the empire appeared to be the only means of securing the peace and civilization of Europe. United, its people were strong ; disunited, each would stand alone in presence of formidable foes. Already the regions of the dimly-known North were sending forth their terrible Vikings. The East, from whose overflowing hive swarms of barbarians had issued age after age, might

yet again pour forth its living clouds to settle on the fair lands of the West, rifling the wealth and obliterating the products of centuries of human industry. In the South, and still more to be dreaded, were the Mussulmans, who in less than a hundred years had stretched the dominion of their false prophet from India to Spain (and who within half a century from Charlemagne's own death, would be seen mooring their vessels in the Tiber, and plundering the Basilica of St. Peter itself).

It must be observed that Charlemagne desired to revive "the empire of Rome in intimate alliance with the Church of Rome:" thus conciliating the veneration of the nations by the union of "whatever was most illustrious in secular history with whatever was most sacred in ecclesiastical traditions." But we must remember that what he aimed at, and while he lived secured for his authority, was the co-operation of the Church of Rome, *not* subordination to it; an alliance which was to give "to the Crown the support of the holiest sanctions, and to the Tiara the aid of the firmest political power." It was the ancient law and custom that the Pope should be elected by the priests, nobles, and people of Rome, but that he should not be consecrated without the consent of the emperor; and this law was transmitted by Charlemagne unchanged to his descendants. But we shall find future popes taking advantage of the weakness of the great emperor's successors, first to free their own election from all intervention of the imperial power, and then to claim authority for themselves to dispose of the empire.

As yet, however, there were thirteen years during which Charlemagne's own wise and vigorous rule was to endure.



## CHAPTER XI.

Charlemagne's Encouragement of Learning.—Alcuin.—Anecdotes of Charlemagne.—His Friendly Relations with the Emperor of the East; and with Haroun-al-Raschid.—Cities &c., founded by him.—Closing Years.—Coronation of his son Louis.—Death of Charlemagne: 814 A.D.—Charlemagne essentially a German Sovereign.—Benefits derived from his Administration by Gaul.

FROM 800 TO 814 A.D.

FROM the time that he was crowned emperor, Charlemagne had no great wars to carry on; and the later years of his reign were chiefly occupied in the creation of institutions designed to strengthen social order and to create a taste for letters and the arts. Many noble studies were pursued in his palace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was converted into an academy of learning by the illustrious scholars whom he had attracted to his service. Foremost among them was the Englishman Alcuin, a deacon of York cathedral, and who, from modesty, it is said, would never accept any higher degree in the orders of the Church. The emperor had become acquainted with him during a journey made by Alcuin to Rome, and had prevailed on him, not without difficulty, to leave his own country and found a school at Aix-la-Chapelle, which attracted numerous students. Frequently the emperor himself with his sons might be seen among the most attentive of Alcuin's audience.\* He urged the young nobility to

\* A few more particulars of Alcuin, "the most celebrated divine of the day, and who is regarded as the restorer of letters in France," may be not unacceptable to English readers. After many years spent in promoting learning at the court, and in various literary and theological labours undertaken by desire of the emperor, Alcuin obtained permission to retire to the abbey of St. Martin at Tours, which Charlemagne had given him. Here

diligence, saying to them, "Because you are rich and the sons of the first men in my kingdom, you think that your birth and wealth suffice you, and that you need not these studies which would do you so much honour. You think only of dress, play, and pleasure: but I declare to you that I make no account of this rank and wealth which procure you consideration in the world; and if you do not quickly repair by assiduous study the time which you have lost in frivolities, never, no never, will you obtain anything of Charles."

He greatly encouraged the laborious care of the monks, who preserved and multiplied copies of the celebrated writings of antiquity; and even caused the princesses, his daughters, to engage in this work of transcription.

Although grave and stern when the occasion required it, "he had a mode of giving advice to those around him in which mirth was joined with sober counsel, and a serious lesson given under the appearance of a jest. For example, although Charlemagne himself displayed upon public occasions a considerable degree of magnificence, it was merely for the support of his imperial dignity in the public eye, and not for the gratification of personal vanity. He dreaded the introduction of softness and luxury among his subjects. On one occasion, observing that his nobility and vassals had indulged to extravagance in silk dresses lined with fur, he invited them thus

also he founded a school, which soon became celebrated. He devoted his last years to studies connected with Holy Writ, and copied with his own hand the whole Bible, making numerous corrections in the translation as he proceeded. This MS. of Alcuin's came to be considered as a standard copy, and many transcripts were made from it. In one of the libraries of Rome a Bible given by Alcuin to Charlemagne is still preserved. He died in 804, and was buried in the church of St. Martin at Tours. Besides Alcuin, John Scotus Erigena, Peter of Pisa, Adelard, the emperor's learned and pious cousin, and Eginhard, Charlemagne's secretary and biographer, with others not unworthy to be associated with them, adorned the court, and assisted the labours of the sovereign.

arrayed to a hunting party, though it was the depth of winter and the day rainy. He then, after they had been completely drenched in the forest, led them back to the royal hall, where the heat of the fire shrivelled up the wet furs. Charles on this gloried in his own plain sheep-skin cloak, which had suffered neither by the storm nor by the heat ; and exhorted the tattered crew by whom he was surrounded to reserve silk and furs for days of ceremony, and to use in war and in the chase the plain but serviceable dress of their ancestors. In a similar spirit he rebuked the foolish arrogance of the Byzantine court, which had treated his envoys with coldness and discourtesy. Understanding that Nicephorus, the Greek emperor, was despatching an embassy in return to Aix-la-Chapelle, Charlemagne gave orders that the guides who were provided to conduct the Greek ambassadors through the Alps should lead them along the wildest passes and the most tedious routes. The Greeks accordingly reached Germany with their persons, dress, and equipage in the sorriest plight imaginable. On their arrival at the court, Charles had them introduced to four of his chief officers in succession, each arrayed in such splendid apparel, and attended by so large a retinue, as to induce the bewildered envoys to render four times over to his servants a homage which they could not pay except to his own imperial person, without a great loss of dignity ; until at length they stood in the presence ‘of the most illustrious of kings, resplendent as the rising sun, glittering with gold and jewels, and leaning on the arm of the very man whom their master had presumed to treat with disrespect.’ ”

“It happened to be the festival of the Circumcision, and the Greeks had brought with them a musical instrument, which, by means of brazen tubes and bellows of ox-hides, produced sounds alternately as solemn as the thunder and as gentle as the lyre. Singing in their own language the Psalms of the day, they were overheard by Charles, who, enraptured by the sacred harmonies, commanded his

chaplains to eat no bread till they had laid before him a Latin version of those beautiful anthems. He had mortified the effeminacy and retaliated the rudeness of his Greek allies, but he enthusiastically felt and acknowledged the charms of their superior civilization. Nor was their embassy ineffectual. Nicephorus formally acknowledged Charles not merely as Rex or Basileus, but as Imperator also, and concurred with him in tracing the line which separated their respective empires in Italy, on the banks of the Danube, and on the shores of the Adriatic."

A sovereign of far wider renown than Nicephorus, even Haroun-al-Raschid, had sought the alliance of the Frank monarch. The Persian caliph bound himself to succour all Christian pilgrims resorting to the Holy Sepulchre, and to protect all Frankish merchants in the prosecution of their affairs in Syria; and the two monarchs entered into friendly relations, which continued in force as long as they lived.\*

Charlemagne constructed several important works, and founded several cities; amongst others Hamburg, Ingolstadt, Halle, Aix-la-Chapelle. He built three palaces, at Aix, at Ingelheim, and at Nimeguen, which were esteemed magnificent in that age, but which were more remarkable for their solidity and extent than for their elegance; the interior of each was, however, very finely decorated with antique marbles from Ravenna and other Italian cities.

At the Champ de Mai of the year 806, the emperor, with the consent of the chief men of his kingdoms, divided his dominions between his three sons, that each should act as viceroy in the portion assigned to him. Charles, the eldest, had Germany and Northern Gaul; Pepin, the

\* Amongst the presents sent by Haroun-al-Raschid to Charlemagne, was a very beautiful and costly striking *clock moved by wheels*, which was regarded as a most rare and precious novelty in Europe. He also sent an elephant, an animal which the Franks had never before seen.

second, Italy and Bavaria, with all the country of the Avars which he had conquered ; Louis, the third son, had Aquitaine, Burgundy, and the Spanish Marches. But Charles and Pepin died before their father ; the former leaving no children, Pepin only one son, Bernard, to whom his grandfather assigned the kingdom of Italy. Domestic affliction more poignant than that occasioned by the loss of his sons saddened the last years of Charlemagne ; his daughters disgraced him by the irregularity of their lives.

He desired to have his surviving son, Louis, publicly acknowledged as his successor in the empire, and having sent for him to Aix-la-Chapelle, presented him to the chief nobles and officers of the government, who had assembled there for the autumnal council, and desired them to recognize him as king and emperor. All consented, and promised allegiance. Then Charles, desiring that his son should hold his power of God only, ordered a crown similar to his own to be placed on the altar, and desired Louis to take it with his own hand and crown himself ; but first, he addressed him in a very earnest and pathetic manner, concerning the duties he owed to the Church, to his subjects, and to his kindred.

The emperor was drawing very near the end of his brilliant career : he devoted his last months to prayer and almsgiving, and the study of the Scriptures, comparing different versions of the Gospel, and causing the text to be corrected with the assistance of certain Greeks and Syrians conversant with the original. He was engrossed in this work until the eve of his death, on 28th January, 814. When he felt that he was dying, he disposed himself as if in order to sleep, and repeating, "*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit*," presently expired. He had entered his 72nd year, had reigned 47 years over the Franks, 43 over the Lombards, and 13 over the Empire of the West.

He was buried with extraordinary magnificence, arrayed in all the insignia of empire, in the minster church which he had built at Aix-la-Chapelle.



On a review of the reign of Charlemagne, the remark not unnaturally suggests itself, that, although occupying a most illustrious place in the line of French kings, he had, comparatively speaking, little to do with France (or Gaul as it was still called). And it is true that Charles was essentially German. Descended from the most distinguished family of the Austrasian or German Franks, his mother tongue was German, his chosen seat of empire, his favourite dwelling-places, were all in Germany; and it was through his policy, by turns warlike and pacific, that Germany ceased to be a mere chaos of tribes and peoples, and became, by degrees, a confederacy of nations united under one head in the German empire; although this change was not finally consummated until nearly a century after the death of the great sovereign who originated it.

But if Germany was more prominently the object of Charlemagne's care, Gaul was none the less indebted to his wise administration for half a century of order and security. And amongst the measures he adopted to promote her peace and prosperity, we may mention one of wise precaution, which was fatally neglected by his successors. Too surely foreboding in his latter years the future invasions of the Northmen, he built numerous vessels for the defence of the coast; stationed several at Boulogne, and others at the mouth of the chief rivers. While he lived, the shores of Gaul were unmolested. Nevertheless some Scandinavian pirate-ships ventured one day to enter the harbour of a town in which Charlemagne happened to be at the time. They quickly put out to sea again, and he watched their flight a long while, with a sorrowful countenance, and even with tears. Turning at last to his companions, who wondered to see the great king so moved, he said to them, "Friends, do you know why I weep? I fear not that these pirates will dare to attack *me*; but if they have ventured near these shores even while I am living, what evil and misery they will bring on my grandchildren and on their subjects!"



## CHAPTER XII.

Feebleness of Charlemagne's Descendants.—Louis *le Débonnaire*, or *the Affable* : Divisions in his Family : Parricidal Rebellions of his Sons : Public Penance and Degradation of the Emperor at Soissons (833).—His Restoration : and Death (840).—Wars between his Sons : Treaty and Oath of Strasburg : The *Romane Tongue*.—The *Langue d'Oil* and *Langue d'Oc*.—Treaty of Verdun : and Final Separation of Gaul from Germany (843).—Kingdom of Gaul henceforward named *France*.

FROM 814 A.D. TO 843.

THE glory of the Carlovingian race and monarchy had culminated in Charlemagne, and it sank at his death to rise no more. "His administrative genius, which embraced in its grasp the pettiest details alike with the great whole," joined to his indefatigable activity, had kept together an empire consisting of unconnected kingdoms inhabited by distinct races of people ; but "under the outward semblance of union the natural isolation still subsisted, threatening the empire with dissolution in its very cradle. So long as he himself lived, the peoples of the Western continent, strangers to each other, remained aggregated under his domination ; but this factitious unity began to disappear when the Frank Cæsar had gone down in imperial robes to his tomb in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle." Gaul aimed at separation from Germany, Italy at separation from both.

The feebleness of Charlemagne's descendants accelerated the disruption of the empire. His immediate successor, Louis, surnamed *le Débonnaire*, on account of his mild good-natured character, was overwhelmed from the first by the greatness of the charge which had devolved upon him.

Most conscientious in his designs, but unskilful in executing them, he set out by ordering a universal reform of all abuses, and punishment of all offenders, especially those who abused their power by oppressing the people ; before he had strengthened himself firmly on the throne, and made sure his own supreme authority. His very courtiers disobeyed him with impunity. Yet, like many feeble though well-meaning men, he sometimes, at the prompting of others, allowed his usual indulgence to be superseded by excessive severity, and thereby lost the respect which the uprightness of his intentions and the general benevolence of his conduct would have procured to him.

With the consent of the chief nobles assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, Louis in 817 associated his son Lothaire with him in the empire, and gave the kingdoms of Bavaria and Aquitaine to his other sons, Louis and Pepin ; his nephew Bernard continuing king of Italy. Bernard was discontented at the elevation of Lothaire ; he aspired to be regarded as the heir of the empire, because his deceased father, Pepin, was older than Louis. Several lords and great men who were dissatisfied with the emperor, encouraged his pretensions, and led him into a war with his uncle ; but in the day of danger most of these seeming friends fell away. Bernard, who was at the emperor's mercy, accepted a safe-conduct, and surrendered, together with his chief adherents.

The empress Ermengarda, desirous that Bernard's kingdom should be added to the portion of her own sons, urged her husband to severity. The principal malcontents were executed, and Bernard, whose life was spared, was condemned to lose his eyes, a sentence which was so unskilfully carried out, that the unhappy young man died in consequence (818).

His miserable fate caused the emperor so much grief and remorse, that a few years afterwards, he performed public penance for his conduct to his nephew, and prostrated himself at the feet of the bishops who had come to

the yearly national meeting, praying for absolution. From this time he held the reins of empire more feebly than before. The frontiers were attacked with impunity on every side. In the south, the Gascons leagued themselves with the Saracens, and ravaged Aquitaine and Provence; the Bretons plundered the west, and the Northern pirates made their descents on the coast almost unchecked.

Ermengarda was dead, and the emperor had married another wife, Judith of Bavaria, who obtained too great an influence over her weak-minded husband. She had one son, Charles, and importuned Louis to bestow a kingdom on him, although he had already partitioned all his empire among his elder sons. He obtained of Lothaire, however, a promise that he would protect his little brother in the enjoyment of the portion assigned to him, and bestowed on Charles Suabia, Switzerland, and the Grisons, which he erected into a kingdom (829). Lothaire repented of his promise almost as soon as he had given it; and, together with his brothers Pepin and Louis of Bavaria, took up arms against his father, whom he took prisoner, and deprived of all power. This unnatural rebellion was, however, suspended for a short time by a reconciliation between the emperor and his undutiful sons; but the latter soon resumed hostilities, and their unfortunate father having been betrayed into their hands by his own soldiers, they immediately deposed him, and divided the empire among themselves.

Fearing, however, that he might hereafter be restored by popular favour (for in Germany especially he had still many loyal subjects), they determined to inflict on him deeper and, as they trusted, hopeless degradation. At the summons of Lothaire, Ebbon, archbishop of Rheims, and other Gaulish prelates who were devoted to his cause, met in council at Compiègne, and drew up a long list of crimes, of which they required the emperor to make public confession.

In the cathedral of Soissons, amidst a crowd of

spectators, Lothaire himself also having come to enjoy the humiliation of his father and his sovereign, Louis was made to accuse himself of having stirred up division and civil war in his empire, thereby causing many acts of sacrilege, homicides, and other grievous crimes, of all which he now owned himself guilty, and deserving of deposition. Having then been stripped of his sword, baldrick, and vestments, he was conducted in sackcloth to the cell assigned for his perpetual residence (833).

But the unnatural conduct of his sons excited the compassion of the people, and won many adherents to the captive emperor. Pepin and Louis of Bavaria soon quarrelled with Lothaire, who desired to see in them merely viceroys of his dominions, maintaining for himself supreme authority over the whole empire; while the kingdoms under the rule of his brothers each desired to sever themselves and remain independent of the imperial authority. These discords favoured the restoration of the emperor, and Lothaire, obliged to replace his father on the throne, begged, and easily obtained, forgiveness. But Louis the Meek had not learnt wisdom by experience; once more he outraged the pretensions of his elder sons and the wishes of his people to gratify his partiality for Charles, the son of his old age, and satisfy the importunity of Judith. Louis, to whom his father left nothing but Bavaria, while he bestowed all the rest of the German territories, together with Aquitaine, on Charles, thought himself particularly ill used: and the people of Aquitaine, who had no mind to be associated in one kingdom with the German populations, to whom they were strangers, were equally discontented. Both parties took up arms against the emperor, who put himself at the head of an army to encounter Louis, but died broken-hearted before he reached him (840). "I forgive my son," he said, in his last moments; "but let him remember that he has brought my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, and that God punishes parricides."

His son Pepin, to whom he had allotted Aquitaine,

had died some time before, leaving a son of the same name, whom the people of that province desired to have for their king.

Immediately on the death of Louis the Meek, a general war ensued among his surviving sons,—Lothaire, Louis of Bavaria, and Charles surnamed the Bald : and in a dreadful battle which took place at Fontanet, near Auxerre, in 841, upwards of one hundred thousand men fell in defence of the pretensions of the various claimants. Lothaire and his nephew Pepin were on one side, Louis and Charles on the other, and the latter had the advantage, but were not in a condition to follow it up. They marched, however, to Strasburg, where they swore alliance with each other in presence of their armies.

The oath pronounced by Louis of Bavaria on this occasion, so that the Neustrian and Gallo-Roman troops of Charles should comprehend him, is the most ancient specimen of the *Romane* tongue, the language from which modern French is derived, that history has preserved. The *Romane* language was formed of a mixture of Celtic and German with a corrupt dialect of Latin, the latter composing much the largest proportion of it. (It was afterwards called the *Walloon* tongue ; and also the *Langue-d'oil*, because of the word *oil*, i.e. *yes*, which was used to express the affirmative ; while the provinces of the south, where a different dialect, called the *Romance* tongue, was spoken, were named the countries of the *Langue d'oc*, because in their language the word *oc* served for affirmation.)

After making and unmaking ten divisions of the empire, the brothers at length came to an agreement which irrevocably separated the realm of Gaul from the empire of Germany. Charles the Bald had all the country lying west of the Scheldt, the Saône, and the Rhone ; and also the north of Spain to the Ebro. Louis of Bavaria (commonly called also Louis the Germanic) had all Germany as far as the east bank of the Rhine. Lothaire, though retaining his title of emperor of the

Romans, relinquished all pretensions to supremacy over his brothers ; he had for his share Italy, Provence, and the long strip of territory lying between the dominions of Louis and Charles, that is to say, the country comprised betwixt the rivers Rhine, Rhone, Saône, Meuse, and Scheldt. It was called from him Lotharingia ; the memory of which word survives in *Lorraine*, still applied to a portion of what were Lothaire's dominions. This partition was agreed upon at Verdun, in the year 843.

From this time, the name France was used to designate the kingdom of Charles the Bald, comprising Neustria, Britanny, and Aquitaine.



## CHAPTER XIII.

Miserable Condition of Gaul.—Incursions of the Northmen.—Robert the Strong.—Outline of the Succession of the Carlovin-gian Kings, from the Treaty of Verdun to the Extinction of the Dynasty.

FROM 843 A.D. TO 987.

THE wars which the descendants of Charlemagne had been waging against each other for the last fifteen years had reduced the empire to a miserable state of weakness. This was especially true of Gaul, comprehending under that name all the country formerly so entitled. Hundreds of thousands of men able for war or labour had perished; the frontiers remained undefended, the lands uncultivated, and famine swept away the population of many districts; fierce bands of wolves came down from the forests on the mountains, and even entered the towns; and men more ferocious than the wolves lurked in the woods, and lay in wait for the unhappy travellers who might chance to travel that way.

Amidst this disorder the Northmen afflicted the country with incessant invasions. "Their fleets of large boats, impelled both by sail and by oar, entered the mouths of rivers, and ascending them sometimes up to their source, landed alternately on either bank bands of intrepid depredators. If a bridge or other obstacle impeded their navigation, the crews drew their vessels on shore, and, placing them on rollers, conveyed them beyond it. From the greater they passed into the smaller rivers, and from one of these into another, seizing upon all the more considerable islands, which they fortified as winter quarters, depositing there, under huts constructed in rows, their booty and their captives. Making their

attacks thus by surprise, and, whenever they had reason to apprehend a determined resistance, retreating with the utmost rapidity, they devastated whole districts to such an extent that (to use the expression of a contemporary) 'where they had passed, no dog remained to bark.'" Castles and fortified places were the sole refuge against them ; but at this first epoch of their irruptions very few castles existed, and even the walls of the old Roman towns were falling into decay. While the wealthy landholders flanked their houses with turreted towers, and surrounded them with deep moats, the inhabitants of the open country retired in crowds to the neighbouring forests, where they encamped in huts defended by palisades and felled trees.

Ill protected by the chiefs of the land, who sometimes endeavoured to bribe the Northmen to retire, and sometimes, still more disgracefully, accepted bribes from them to abandon the country to their mercy, the peasantry took courage from despair, and, armed merely with clubs, would encounter the axes of the Normans. In other cases, finding resistance vain, depressed and demoralized, they renounced their baptismal vow to propitiate their pirate conquerors, and ate of the flesh of a horse sacrificed on the altar of Odin, as a token of their initiation into the Scandinavian idolatry. This apostasy was very general in the quarters most exposed to the disembarkation of the pirates, who even recruited their ranks from among the very people that had lost all by their ravages ; and according to ancient historians, even the famous sea-king Hastings was the son of a peasant near Troyes.

After wasting the country along the Loire from 845 to 850, and sacking Bordeaux and Saintes, Hastings sailed round Spain, made a descent in Italy, and again returned to France to ravage the lands south of the Seine. Charles the Bald had confided the defence of this territory to Robert the Strong, count of Paris, a valiant man, whose descendants were to replace the Carlovingian race on the

throne of France one hundred and thirty years afterwards. But Robert was killed in a night attack of the Normans. As for the king himself, he could do nothing for the deliverance of his subjects, but remained shut up trembling with fear in St. Denis, while the Northmen were plundering Paris. After forty years of this piratical warfare, Hastings was bribed to tranquillity by the gift of the county of Chartres, which he, however, abandoned when seventy years old, to sail away in quest of fresh adventures.

It has been well said that the epithets bestowed by history on the successors of Charlemagne, all taken from personal or mental imperfections, sufficiently attest the contempt entertained for them ; such nicknames as the *Bald*, the *Simple*, the *Stammerer*, the *Fat*, would never have been given to men who possessed claims to the gratitude and respect of their subjects. The frequent partitions and repartitions of territory between these incapable monarchs and their kinsmen in Italy, Germany, &c., together with the interruptions in the line of succession, render this portion of the history of France so confused, that it will be best to present first a brief outline of the succession of the remaining Carlovingian kings, and then to narrate such circumstances as are most worthy of observation in the general history of France during their reigns.

Lothaire, the eldest son of Louis the Meek, consumed, it is said, with remorse for his rebellions against his father, early retired to a monastery. His three sons divided his territories. Louis got the crown of the Cæsars with Italy ; Lothaire II. had Lotharingia ; Charles had Provence. Charles died, and his brothers divided his inheritance ; but Lothaire also dying without heirs in a few years, his uncles, Charles the Bald and Louis the Germanic, agreed to share his dominions between them. The young emperor Louis also died, leaving no son, in 875 ; then Charles the Bald contrived to make himself master of Italy and the imperial crown, but died in less than two years ; and his brother, Louis the Germanic,

died also about the same time. Charles the Fat, son of Louis the Germanic, now became emperor of the Romans, uniting Italy and Germany under his feeble rule ; while Louis the Stammerer, son of Charles the Bald, succeeded his father in France ; and followed him to the tomb within two years after his accession (879). He left two sons, Louis III. and Carloman, who agreed to reign together ; but both of them died young, and left no children. They had, however, a young brother Charles, afterwards surnamed *the Simple*, who had been born after his father's death, and was at this time but five years old. On account of his youth, he was set aside for the present ; and the emperor, Charles the Fat, was made king of France (884). At the end of three or four years he became deranged, and was deposed (888).

A son of Robert the Strong, Eudes, count of Paris, which city he had just been gallantly defending against the Normans, was now chosen king, and retained the crown ten years. At his death, Charles the Simple was raised to the throne. He was deposed after twenty-five years' reign, on account of his incapacity ; and the chiefs of the kingdom elected in his stead the brother of king Eudes, Robert, duke of France (922). The *duchy of France* comprehended the counties of Paris and Orleans, the territories of Chartres, Blois, and Beauvais, Touraine, Perche, Maine, and Anjou ; and by reason of the extent of his dominions, its possessor was a very much more powerful man than the king.

The people of Lorraine and Belgium were faithful to the deposed king ; and with their help Charles raised an army, and met Robert on the field of battle, at Attigny, in Champagne. A great number of men on both sides fell, and Robert was amongst the slain. But Charles, who was not valiant, was already in full flight when he was informed of the death of his rival ; and even then dared not venture to resume his crown. Robert's son, Hugh the Fair, duke of France, chose rather to be king-maker than king ; and set the crown on the head of

Rodolph of Burgundy, his brother-in-law. Rodolph treated the unfortunate Charles kindly, and restored to him some of the royal manors, on which he lived in retirement till his death, which took place in 929. He left one young son, Louis, whose mother, an English princess, carried him over to England, where he was brought up at the Court of Edmund I. Rodolph died in 934, childless. His powerful brother-in-law, Hugh the Fair, might have taken the crown for himself, had he chosen to do so ; but he thought very truly that he enjoyed more real authority as the hereditary lord of so many great fiefs, than he would have as an elective king. He therefore recalled the son of Charles the Simple from England, and caused him to be crowned at the age of sixteen, in 936, by the title of Louis IV.

The only portion of France in which the king was really a sovereign at that time was the county of Laon ; everywhere else dukes, counts, owners of great lordships, possessed much more power than the titular monarch. Louis possessed sufficient spirit to struggle against the lordly pretensions of the nobles, and was consequently engaged in perpetual contests. He was killed by an accident in 954. His son Lothaire succeeded him, being then twelve years old, and reigned thirty-two years, of which the latter half was disturbed by feuds and wars with Otho II., emperor of Germany ; and with Hugh Capet, the son of Hugh the Fair, and no less powerful than his father. Lothaire dying in 986, was succeeded by his only son Louis V., ignominiously surnamed the Lazy. He died, like his father, from the consequences of a fall, the year after his accession.

One heir of the race of Charlemagne still remained, Charles of Lorraine, the second son of Louis IV. But Hugh Capet was chosen in preference, by the chiefs of the kingdom, and when Charles came to assert his rights, he met only with defeat and captivity (987).

Thus after a period of 235 years (from the deposition of Chilperic III. by Pepin the Short, in 752, to the

coronation of Hugh Capet in 987), the Carlovingian, like the Merovingian dynasty, expired by its own feebleness.

A new polity,—that of the feudal system, had been gradually growing up during this period. Already it had struck deep its roots ; it was rapidly changing the face of society, and it was about to give a new character to the French monarchy. While reviewing in another chapter the chief incidents of the national history during the last 150 years, we shall be able to mark the circumstances to which French historians ascribe the rise of feudality.



## CHAPTER XIV.

Hincmar.—Papal Aggressions.—Edicts of Charles the Bald fatal to the Royal Authority.—Siege of Paris, 886 A.D.—Cession of Neustria to the Northmen.—Rollo.—Magyar Invasion.

FROM 843 TO 987 A.D.

FROM the time of Charles the Bald to that of Charles the Fat, the leading character of the kingdom was Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims. Descended from a noble family, he had divided the early part of his life between the court and the cloister, displaying so much ability and enthusiasm in the discharge of the duties attached to either situation, as to combine the practical penetration of a statesman with the rigour of a zealous ecclesiastic. He was raised to the see of Rheims in 845, at the age of thirty-nine, and filled it for nearly forty years with the utmost activity, and with despotic vigour. But he was, in fact, says a French historian, "the real master of the whole of Gaul." On all public occasions of weighty deliberation he was invariably the directing spirit; for, whether things temporal or things spiritual were in question, whether war or peace, the universal talents of Hincmar rendered him necessary to the State. He is charged with some very serious faults of character; but it is to his praise that he firmly and successfully defended the independence of the Crown of France against the attempted encroachments of the Pope, exhorting the latter to "consider that he was not at the same time king and bishop; that his predecessors had regulated the Church, which was their concern,—not the State, which was the heritage of kings," &c.

The feebleness of Charles and of his father invited the aggressions of the Pontiffs. Under Louis the Meek, two

popes in succession had set at nought the ancient rule, which required that their election should be confirmed by the emperor ; and Charles the Bald, in his eager ambition to become emperor after the death of his nephew Louis, condescended to accept the vacant empire as the donation of Pope John VIII. In return he released the popes from the obligation of having their election to the see of Rome confirmed by consent of the emperors. These acts had very pernicious consequences ; but as they concerned Germany and Italy more than France, we may dismiss them without further notice.

But two edicts passed by this king, one at the beginning, the other at the end of his long reign, demand especial notice, because they laid the axe to the root of the royal authority. This was particularly the case with the first edict, which was issued in 847, and decreed that every free man might choose at his pleasure whether the king, or one of the king's vassals, should be his superior lord ; and also that no vassal should be obliged to follow the king to war, unless it were war with a foreign enemy. So that in case of *civil* war, the king could henceforward have no power to command the assistance of his vassals.

Thirty years afterwards, Charles issued another edict, decreeing that all the places of honour and trust, and likewise the landed estates, which had been originally bestowed by the sovereign as benefices to be held only during the lifetime of the person to whom they were granted, should henceforward be the property of the holder, to be transmitted by him to his heirs.

Money being in those days scarce, and no revenue being raised for the sovereign in the shape of taxes, the kings had been used to recompense the services rendered to them by gifts of land. In this way they had parted with a very large portion of those extensive domains which had heretofore constituted the property of the Crown ; and by this edict, which prevented them from resuming the estates they had intended to bestow only for a season, the royal possessions became much smaller than those of

many of their subjects ; and the king had no longer the means of purchasing or of rewarding the services which he required.

Under Charles the Fat, Paris sustained a memorable siege. The Normans, essaying in 886 to pass up the river, were bravely repulsed by the citizens, under the leading of Count Eudes and the valiant bishop Gosselin. But the enemy blockaded the city, and lay before it a year and a half, reducing the inhabitants to great extremity by famine, as well as harassing them by frequent attacks. Gosselin perished, and many more. At length Charles the Fat, who was in Germany collecting an army, appeared on the heights of Montmartre, at the head of a large body of troops ; and the hearts of the besieged were filled with joy and exultation. The more bitter was their mortification when they learnt that their king was not only bribing the Normans to depart, by weighing out to them seven hundred pounds of silver, but that he had even given them free permission to pass under the walls of Paris, and ascend the Seine to the rich provinces in the centre of the kingdom, which they had not yet pillaged. This, at least, the citizens were determined to hinder to the utmost of their power ; and they barred the water-way so resolutely, that the pirates were forced to transport their boats overland to a point higher up the river, and re-embark there. The dastardly conduct of the king on this occasion seems to have been owing, in part, to mental disorder ; and the universal obloquy which the result of his expedition brought upon him, together with domestic unhappiness, reduced him almost to idiocy. He was deposed at the diet of Tribur, in 888 ; Arnulph, an illegitimate descendant of Charlemagne, being chosen emperor in his place, while Count Eudes was elected king of France.

In the reign of his feeble successor, Charles the Simple, the Normans permanently established themselves in the kingdom. Hrolf or Rollo, son of a great Norwegian chief, having been banished from his native country,

gathered to himself a body of his countrymen, took possession of the mouths of the Loire and the Seine, sacked Tours and destroyed the cathedral, tempted by the rich offerings which had been bestowed on the shrine of its patron St. Martin ; while another portion of the force, under command of Rollo himself, took possession of the city of Rouen, and made it their head-quarters and citadel, depositing within its walls the spoil which they accumulated from all parts of Neustria. Utterly incapable of resisting these formidable antagonists, and importuned by all orders and conditions of his subjects to put a stop to the ravages of the Northmen, at whatever price, Charles proposed to Rollo, that if he would consent to embrace the Christian religion, and live in peace with the king, he should receive all the province of Neustria for his own hereditary lordship, and also the hand of the king's daughter, Gisèla. Rollo accepted these terms ; and in order to ratify the treaty in the most solemn manner, the king of France and the Norman chief repaired to the village of St.-Clair-sur-Epte. Each was accompanied by a numerous train ; the French pitched their tents on the one bank of the river, and the Normans on the other.

At the hour appointed for the interview, Rollo approached the king, and remaining standing, placed his hands between those of Charles, pronouncing the formula :—"Henceforth I am your vassal and your man, and I swear faithfully to protect your life, your limbs, and your royal honour." Then the king, and the nobles who had accompanied him, swore on their part to protect the Norman chief in the possession of the territory assigned to him, and gave him the title of Count (soon afterwards changed by Rollo to that of Duke). But when Rollo was about to retire, conceiving the ceremony to be at an end, the French lords said to him, "It is fitting that he who receives such a gift as this is, should kneel before the king and kiss his foot." "Never will I kiss any man's foot, or bend the knee before him," was the Norman's answer ; but the lords seeming disposed to insist on

this formality, the last remnant of the etiquette which had been observed at the court of the Frank emperors, the royal counsellors suggested that the difficulty might be overcome if Count Rollo would appoint a deputy to kiss in his name the foot of Charles. Rollo accordingly signed to one of his men to come near, and bade him kiss the king's foot, upon which the rough seaman carelessly stooped down, without bending the knee, and catching up the royal foot to lift it to his mouth, threw the simple monarch backwards, exposing him to the laughter of all around.

The essentials of the treaty were more satisfactorily settled. Rollo governed his new dominions (which henceforth took the name of Normandy) with much sagacity ; and the hope of more complete security for life and goods under the protection of so fearless a ruler, induced many artisans and other men of the most useful classes to migrate from the other provinces into Normandy. As for the native proprietors of the province, their lands were shared out afresh between the companions of Rollo, without any respect to the rights of the former owners, who were compelled to accommodate themselves to the will of the new-comers, to give place to them if so required, or to hold the lands which had been their own, as mere tenants or vassals of their Norman masters.

Rollo and most of his warriors received baptism readily. Those who refused it united together to form a kind of separate colony, in the environs of Bayeux, and the little peninsula of Cotentin. In the former place a colony of Saxons had settled ages before, and still preserved their own language and manners ; the Scandinavian immigrants became fused together in one people with these ancient settlers ; and centuries afterwards, when their repugnance to Christianity had been overcome, the Norman barons of Bessin and the Cotentin were still remarkable for their turbulent independence of character, which scarcely brooked submission to the rule of the hereditary dukes, successors of their first chief, Rollo ; they long preserved their

ancient language also, while the other Normans early dropped it, and adopted the *Romane* tongue of northern France.

Invaders, more dreaded than even the Normans had been, afflicted France under the reign of Louis IV. Beyond the Ural mountains, a tribe of Turks, it is thought, had intermixed with the Finns, the original race of Northern Asia and Europe. Pressed on from the East by other tribes set in motion by war or want, they broke up their camps and advanced towards the West. They forced their way through the Russian tribes, penetrated the passes of Mount Krapak, and spread themselves over Pannonia, their future country. They called (and still call) themselves Magyars; by the Europeans they were called Turks and Hungarians. While Arnulph of Germany occupied the imperial throne, the Hungarians were kept in check; but when he died, leaving only an infant son, they burst their bounds, overflowed all Germany, even to the Baltic, and obliged its princes to pay them tribute for more than thirty years. They entered Italy on the north-west, and swept it with fire and sword to the point of Reggio. France saw the terrible strangers first in her north-eastern provinces, and they crossed the land to the Pyrenees, spreading ruin along their track. Happily they did not long abide there, but were like a great wave, which, having spent its force, recedes. After having been the terror of Europe for nearly half a century, they were finally quelled and driven back into Pannonia by the valiant Saxon princes Henry the Fowler and Otho the Great.



## CHAPTER XV.

The Feudal System: its Nature and Effects.—Condition of the People.

WE have seen in a former chapter that Charles Martel, the great ancestor of the Carlovingian kings, had introduced a practice of granting, occasionally, hereditary benefices (under the name of *fiefs*), on condition of rendering homage to the sovereign; and also that an edict issued in 877 by Charles the Bald, had converted *all* benefices into hereditary fiefs; a measure which was, in fact, forced upon him by the great lords and officers (far more powerful than the king), who were in possession of lands and places of trust and authority, which they desired to perpetuate in their families. In the declining state of the French monarchy, the nobles had been gradually growing independent of the royal authority; and a prince of greater ability than Charles the Bald might well have found it impossible to resist their demands. But this edict, and that issued by the same king thirty years before, which permitted every freeman to choose his own suzerain, or superior lord, set the seal on a revolution which had long been going forward, and which, when fully completed, resulted in the feudal system.

The dukes, counts, and marquises (or *margraves*, who guarded the *marches* or frontiers), had gradually encroached on the royal dignity. Having now obtained that their own dignities and governments should be hereditary, they no longer considered themselves mere delegates of the monarch who had conferred these gifts on them, or of his successors; but in all respects, excepting the title of king, formed an order of petty sovereigns. They dis-

tributed justice in their own right, coined money, made laws and ordinances, and excepting the deference and allegiance they owed to their suzerain, the monarch, acted as independent princes, each in his own province.

In the courts of these princely vassals of the Crown, the same form of feudal grants took place. The duke, count, or marquis assigned offices connected with his own little court, and distributed lands to nobles of lower rank, on condition of obtaining their assistance in war and their counsels in peace, being the services which the great vassal himself rendered to the sovereign. These tenures extended still lower. Thus, if the great vassal had his officers of the household and his military officers, who gave him their service and that of their followers in war, each of these inferior feudatories had his household modelled on the same footing, differing only as their vassals and dependents were fewer in number, and less liberally recompensed. The same system extended lower still; so that the domestic establishments of many private gentlemen, however reduced the scale, resembled that of the sovereign himself; and though these gentlemen, or inferior nobles, had only the rank of vassals while rendering attendance on the lord from whom they held their fiefs, each of them might, notwithstanding, fancy himself a prince when seated in his own tower, and surrounded by his own dependents, bearing the pompous titles of Chief Steward, Grand Huntsman, &c. &c., and distinguished as such by appropriate duties at home and abroad.

But by this system, almost all the small landholders, who had hitherto enjoyed their estates free from all obligations excepting that of military service against the public enemy, lost their independence. For, finding themselves exposed without protection to the tyranny of the powerful lords who exercised jurisdiction in the provinces, they resorted to the only means open to them of securing a defence against oppression,—that of becoming the vassals of their formidable neighbours. Thus, the freeholder surrendered his *allodial* lands to the lord whom

circumstances or inclination directed him to choose for his suzerain, and received them back again as *feudal*, acknowledging himself his lord's vassal, and taking on him the feudal obligations.

These obligations were mutual. The vassal was bound to follow his lord to war during a limited period (usually forty days), and that against even a superior lord, or the king himself. He was not to divulge his lord's counsel, to injure his person or fortune, or the honour of his family. In battle, he was to give his horse to his lord if dismounted, to give himself as a hostage for him if taken prisoner. He was to attend his lord's courts as a witness or a judge. He was to pay a fine on receiving, and another on alienating his fief: he was to pay an *aid* to redeem his lord from captivity; to enable his lord to pay his own fine to *his* suzerain on taking possession of his own fief, &c. &c. The *aids* varied in number in different places; and these obligations mostly grew up gradually, as the power of the lords enabled them to encroach. On the part of the lord, the principal obligation was that of affording protection to his vassal.

The Church, though shielded in some considerable degree by the sacred character attached to its possessions, did not escape the universal spoliation. Though the clergy were not unfrequently men of war, using other than spiritual weapons, they could not meet the feudal lords on equal terms. The rich abbeys therefore adopted the practice of choosing an *advocate* in the person of some neighbouring lord, on whom they bestowed sundry privileges, and generally some good fief, and who was in consequence bound to defend the interest of his clients in courts of law and on the field of battle.

When this system of feudal dependence, from the highest to the lowest rank of the gentry and landholders, began to assume the form of fixed and assured law, it produced an influence on the government and manners of the nation which was in some respects advantageous, in others much the reverse. In the first point of view,

it gave a high tone of independence and courage to the community thus divided into vassals and superiors ; each, from the private gentleman to the sovereign on the throne, rendering the same or similar service to his superior which he received from his vassals ; all jealous of their privileges as free men, tenacious of their personal rights, and equally so of their military reputation. Each vassal paid to his superior that service and homage which his fief, in its peculiar nature, required ; but, that once discharged, his obligation was ended, and he was as free a man as his superior himself.

But in other respects the independence of the great crown vassals on the king, and that of the barons of the second order on the crown vassals, an independence which descended to the lowest link of the feudal chain, formed but a feeble system of government, and gave an insecurity to the ties which bound together the national compact. The whole kingdom, instead of a country having one interest and one government, seemed to be divided among the great vassals of the Crown, none of whom were disposed to admit the king to possess, or to allow him to exercise, more power over them than the monarch was strictly entitled to by the rules of the feudal tenure. This spirit of resistance was the more alert as these great feudatories considered the diminution of the king's influence to be the ready mode of increasing their own ; and probably many of them looked forward to the time when each grand vassal might altogether shake himself free from the feudal yoke, and possess his dukedom or county in his own right, as an independent prince.

Moreover, the same principle of disunion which induced the crown vassals to encroach upon the rightful claims of the Crown for obedience and support, was undermining their own ; and *their* vassals and dependents were frequently disposed to refuse that service to them which they hesitated to grant the king. It was the result of both circumstances, that the unanimous power of the nation could not be easily exerted, while it was divided

by so many subjects of dispute and hostility. And to this disunion we may also attribute (at least in a great measure) the tyrannous rights assumed by the feudal lords within their own territories, where the barons of inferior rank, without even the pretence of law or justice, oppressed and ruined the unhappy serfs, and robbed, imprisoned, mutilated, murdered, without any check save their own haughty pleasure.

The condition of all below the class of gentry, that is to say, of the bulk of the population, was by no means happy. They were of three classes; the slaves, the serfs attached to the land, and the free peasants or *villains*, artisans, or commoners; for this third division included men of very various circumstances as to their birth and means of living, but all alike regarded as *ignoble* by the men of gentle birth. The slave was utterly at his lord's mercy, with all that he possessed. The serf, bought and sold with the land on which he laboured, was scarcely in a better position, for he could not change his master, however ill he might be treated by him; he could not marry without his master's consent; nor bequeath to his children any portion of the fruits of his industry; whatever he possessed at his death was claimed by his owner. The condition of the *villains* also, or commoners who resided as tenants on the domains of a feudal lord, was often deplorable, though these were freemen, and their goods were their own. But as the power of the lords increased, the *villains* were more and more oppressed with forced contributions, either in money or in labour, and had constantly to fear some fresh tyrannical interference with their liberty of action. If they took refuge, as very many did, in the towns, they were subject to equal oppression on the part of the count or governor of the district; tolls, duties, taxes of all kinds, were invented to wring money from them; and in the end, the citizens of the towns, as well as the peasantry, were subjected to an arbitrary tax, called the *taille*, or tallage, which was felt to be especially burdensome. Besides

these contributions, whenever their lord or their lord's people came into their neighbourhood, they were obliged to furnish, without payment, whatever was required; provisions, furniture, horses, waggons, all was forcibly carried off at the will of the master or his servants; and the *villains* had no redress, and seldom dared even to complain. In a word, all the strength and well-being of the community was monopolized by the holders of fiefs, great or small: *they* only had real freedom and privileges, power, comfort, and authority.

Under the kings of the third or Capetian dynasty, France was for a long period the scene of sanguinary struggles between the Crown and the great feudal lords, as well as between the lords themselves. The disunion of the latter turned at length to the advantage of the oppressed commoners, since it conduced to the eventual triumph of the Crown. For when the royal authority became sufficiently established to impose a check on the conduct of the lords, a middle class of commoners grew up under the shadow of the throne, enjoying a degree of civil liberty which raised them far above the level of the serfs, though it still left them very far beneath the privileged condition of the gentry of the land.

It is important to observe, that for about two hundred and fifty years (from the time of Hugh Capet to that of St. Louis) the feudal system took the place of all other legislation in France; the different codes of laws which had been in force among the original inhabitants, and conquering races who had settled in Gaul, falling into disuse. The ancient national meetings and assizes of the Franks were superseded by the feudal courts, in which the lord presided, while his vassals sat in judgment upon one another. It was generally admitted that no man could be judged but by his peers; understanding by *peers* vassals of equal rank with the person accused. The great vassals of the Crown, viz. the dukes of Normandy, Aquitaine, and Burgundy, and the counts of Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse, were entitled *peers of France*: to these six lay peers were afterwards added



six ecclesiastics ; the archbishops of Rheims and of Sens, the bishops of Noyon, Beauvais, Châlons, and Langres. When a peer of France was placed on his trial, the king presided over the tribunal.

In any important dispute or accusation, when the accused party denied the crime imputed to him, the trial by combat was the usual method of deciding the matter ; the issue being referred to the encounter in the lists of two champions espousing the different sides of the contest.

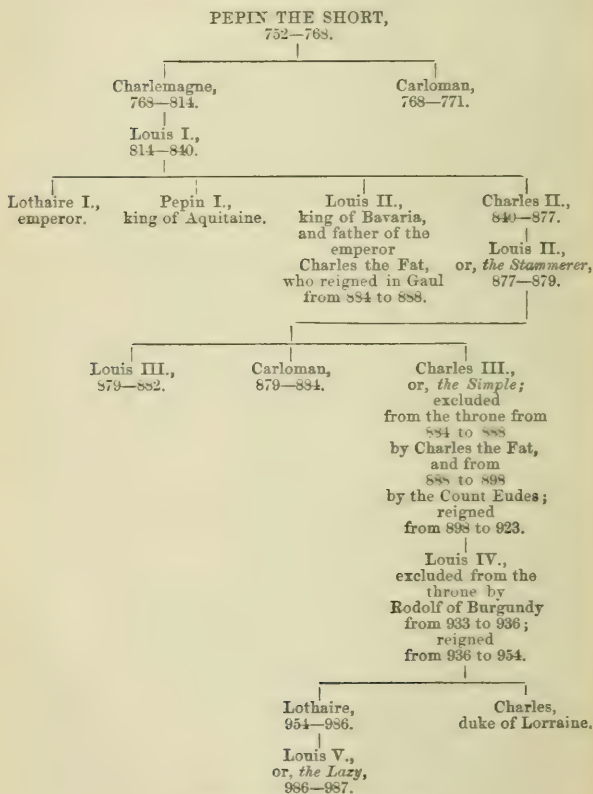
All these laws and usages concerned only the nobles and gentry ; the bulk of the people, or "ignoble populace," being of no account in the eye of feudal law. Religion alone enjoined the great man to behave with equity and mercy towards the artisan, the trader, and the labourer, who tilled his lands, fashioned his weapons, and brought to his castle the articles of necessity or luxury with which his own estates could not supply him ; but feudality attained its full development in an age of iron, when might made right, and little heed was given to the wrongs of any who were too feeble and obscure to vindicate their own cause by strength of arm. And the privileged classes were the better able to intimidate and control their inferiors, in that to them alone pertained the use of armour. Mounted on his powerful war-horse, covered from head to foot with helmet and coat of mail, and armed with sword and buckler, lance and battle-axe, the gentleman had little indeed to fear from the knife, the bow and arrow which constituted the sole means of defence or offence possessed by the peasant.

The fortification of the houses of the gentry, a usage which rapidly became general, increased yet more the wide difference which parted them from the rest of the population. The great nobles had obliged Louis IV. to authorize them to construct strongholds for themselves ; they extended the same permission to their vassals, and very soon, keeps and fortresses arose all over France.

It is necessary, however, to remember that in Aquitaine the people generally enjoyed more freedom than in northern France ; the cities of the south, especially, had

in many cases preserved their ancient municipal privileges, and presented an aspect of wealth and civilization which could not be paralleled north of the Loire.

### A GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE CARLOVINGIAN KINGS.



Last of the Carolingian kings.

PART SECOND.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF THE CAPETIAN DYNASTY  
TO THE REIGN OF FRANCIS THE FIRST.

FROM 987 A.D. TO 1515.



## CHAPTER XVI.

The great Fiefs of France.—Reign of Hugh Capet.—General Expectation of the End of the World.—King Robert the Pious: his Benevolence and Superstition; his Excommunication.—Queen Constance.—Persecutions.—Henry I.—The Great Famine (1033).—Wars of the Nobles.—*The Truce of God*.—Henry's Marriage with a Russian Princess.

FROM 987 A.D. TO 1060.

AT the accession of the kings of the Capetian line, France was divided into seven great fiefs or principalities; five in the north, and two in the south. The five in the north were,—the duchy of France, to the possession of which was henceforth attached the royal title; the duchy of Normandy; the duchy of Burgundy; the county (or earldom) of Flanders, and that of Champagne.\*

The two great fiefs of the south were the duchy of Aquitaine and the earldom of Toulouse. To these great principalities, we may add the county of Barcelona, which continued dependent on the crown of France to the thirteenth century, and to which were attached Roussillon and Cerdagne, on the north side of the Pyrenees.

Dependent on each great fief were other considerable fiefs, some of them large enough to form important principalities.

On the duchy of France depended the county of Maine and that of Anjou. (Hugh Capet, duke of France, and

\* To speak with more rigid precision, the county of *Vermandois* was at this period the fifth great fief of the north; but a considerable portion of the Vermandois territory being afterwards attached to the earldom of Champagne, the latter became and continued a principal fief, instead of that of Vermandois.

afterwards king, was also count of Orleans.) The duchy of Normandy possessed as its principal fief that of Brittany. The duchy of Burgundy included the counties of Bar, of Nevers, of Charollais, and others.

Flanders (which Charles the Bald had constituted an earldom in favour of his son-in-law, Baldwin *of the Iron Arm*), included the counties of Ponthieu, Artois, and Hainault.

Champagne included those of Meaux, Troyes, Blois, Chartres, Valois, Rethel, and others.

On the great and powerful duchy of Aquitaine, depended the counties of Berri, Poitiers, Marche, Angoulême, Auvergne, Perigord, and others. The duchy of Gascony was also reckoned a dependency of Aquitaine; but under duke Sancho, whom the Saracens surnamed *Mittara*, or the Ravager, Gascony had rendered itself independent.

The earldom of Toulouse included the counties of Quercy and Rouergue; the marquisate of Provence (called also the *Comtat Venaissin*); the viscounty of Narbonne, &c.

Each of these great secondary fiefs had many smaller fiefs dependent on it, whose possessors bore the title of viscount, baron, or châtelain.

Besides all these divisions, a portion of what is now France had been detached from it long before the extinction of the Carlovingian line, to form part of the kingdom of Burgundy, which was quite distinct from the *duchy* of that name, and was subsequently called the kingdom of Arles. It included the whole territory bounded by the Faucilles mountains, the Cevennes, the river Saône, the Jura, the Alps, and the Mediterranean. After it had been a separate kingdom for a considerable time, the emperor Otho III. united it, in 1032, to the crown of Germany. But Switzerland and other great provinces of the kingdom of Arles eventually rendered themselves independent of the emperors; and some of the chief provinces were recovered one after another to the crown of France.

Another portion of the great Carlovingian empire, and



the first which rendered itself independent after the death of Charlemagne, was Navarre, which long continued a separate kingdom.

At the accession of Hugh Capet, the king of France was acknowledged as suzerain of all the territory comprised between the ocean, the Scheldt, the Meuse, the Saône, the Rhone, the Mediterranean, and the Pyrenees ; but his authority was but nominal in regard of the great vassals of the crown ; and it could only be said that he really ruled in his own duchy of France, which was bounded by Flanders and the Vermandois on the north, Champagne on the east, Aquitaine on the south, Normandy and Brittany on the west. The territory within these limits was named the domain of the Crown ; and the chief portion of it was included in the Isle of France.

The reign of Hugh lasted nine years. It was distinguished in no other way than by the cruel wars which the great vassals waged one with another ; the horrible plague which, appearing first in Aquitaine, spread from thence over a large portion of the kingdom, and swept away a multitude of people ; and the general misery and suffering which confirmed men in the notion that the end of the world was at hand. This expectation (which was founded on a misinterpretation of a passage in the Revelation of St. John) had been widely diffused during the last thirty years, and it pervaded every rank of society. As the year 1000, the year, it was expected, of doom, drew nigh, many persons, even nobles, princes, and bishops, “ abandoned their friends and their homes, and hastened to the shores of Palestine, in the persuasion that Mount Sion would be the throne of Christ when He should descend to judge the world ; and these, in order to secure a more partial sentence from the God of mercy and charity, usually made over their property before they departed to some church or monastery. Others, whose pecuniary means were small, endeavoured to bribe the justice of Heaven by devoting their personal service to some convent or abbey, making themselves the bondmen

of those pious recluses whose pleadings, they hoped, would find favour for them at the eternal judgment-seat. Others permitted their lands to lie waste, and their houses to go to decay ; or, terrified by some unusual phenomenon in the heavens, betook themselves in hasty flight to the shelter of rocks and caverns, as if the temples of nature were destined to preservation amidst the wreck of man and his works. The year of terror arrived, and passed away without any extraordinary convulsion. The people returned to their homes, and repaired their buildings, and resumed their former occupations ; and the only lasting effect of this stupendous panic was the augmentation of the temporal prosperity of the Church."

Four years before the much-dreaded period arrived, Hugh ended his days, recommending his son and successor above all things to preserve inviolate the treasures belonging to the abbeys, and to submit himself obediently to the Pope.

Robert succeeded his father in 996, and reigned thirty-five years ; a mild, devout, and benevolent prince, whose charity was, however, in some respects more amiable than judicious. There were very many indigent and miserable persons ; it could not be otherwise when dearth was so frequent an affliction, that out of seventy years (from 970 to 1040) forty-eight are noted as years of famine, or of its consequence, pestilence. The kind-hearted king fed, it is said, a thousand mendicants every day ; but allowed his bounty to be abused sometimes with too great indulgence. Being at supper one evening in his newly built castle of Etampes, he ordered the gates to be freely thrown open to the poor who waited without. One man seated himself under the table at the king's feet, and while Robert gave him food with his own hands, he contrived to cut off unobserved an ornament of gold, weighing six ounces, which hung from the hem of the king's robe. When the king rose from the table, the theft was perceived, and the queen was indignant. "It matters not," said Robert ; "no doubt the poor man wanted it more than I do." Another

day he was praying in church ; a thief approached, and kneeling close behind him began to cut off the gold fringe of his cloak. The king perceived it, but said nothing till the robber had taken off half the fringe. Then he turned to him, and said quietly, "That will do, friend ; leave the other half for some one else." Many more such traits are recorded of him.

Though sincerely anxious to act uprightly, superstition had strangely perplexed his notions of right and wrong. He had a horror of perjury, but did not think an oath binding on the conscience unless it had been sworn on the relics of a saint. Acting on this persuasion, when any persons of whose sincerity he was doubtful were about to take an oath to him, he would cause them to place their hands on a reliquary from which he had secretly removed the contents. By this means he believed that he averted from them the guilt of false swearing, should they break the oath they had taken. And he occasionally took an oath in like manner himself, if he thought that he should not keep it.

He took great delight in the sacred services of the Church, led the choir himself occasionally, and composed Latin hymns, which are still known and valued.

But although not unjustly named King Robert *the Pious*, he was not able to escape the severest censure of the Pope, Gregory V. Robert had taken to wife Bertha of Blois. She was very distantly related to him ; but the Pope, declaring her to be within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, insisted that Robert should put her away, and perform seven years of penance ; and on his refusal, excommunicated him. Robert maintained his ground for a time ; but his own nobles and bishops shunned him, and the very servants of the palace were afraid to wait upon their royal master, so great at that time was the dread of ecclesiastical censure. After some ineffectual struggles, the king submitted, and complied with both the Pope's injunctions. He afterwards married Constance, daughter of the earl of Toulouse, a woman of a violent, imperious

disposition, who reigned in his name, and at the same time braved his authority. On one point—the persecution of heretics and Jews—the mild king showed as little relenting as his fierce partner. The unhappy Jews were everywhere insulted, pillaged, and even slain with impunity. The first execution of heretics by fire took place in this reign. Thirteen unfortunate persons were condemned to be burnt in the year 1017, men of no mean condition or character. One of them had been the queen's confessor; she was present with King Robert at his cruel death, and as he passed near her on his way to the stake, she put out one of his eyes with a blow from the wand which she held in her hand.

Robert died in 1031, and was succeeded by his son, Henry I. Immediately on his accession, Henry found himself involved in war with his mother, who desired to place her youngest son on the throne. Henry, however, upheld by the Church, and by his powerful vassal, Robert *the Magnificent*, duke of Normandy, defeated his opponents. He provided for his brother by bestowing on him the duchy of Burgundy, which, during the last reign, had become united to the crown. Henry did nothing very remarkable; but his reign became unhappily memorable for a dreadful famine, which began in 1033, in consequence of continual rain destroying the harvest, and gave occasion to many horrible instances of cannibalism. An eye-witness who relates these circumstances mentions also that in some places the famishing people mixed white clay with their bran and meal, to make their scanty stock last longer, but soon found out that life could not be sustained by such a mixture; and the living were too feeble to bury the dead. Yet, amidst the universal desolation, the nobles carried on their private wars. The clergy repeatedly interposed, and sought to check these miserable strifes, even by threatening the combatants with excommunication, but without success; until the proclamation of the "*Truce of God*" mitigated the fury of private warfare, by limiting the hours during which it

could be pursued. This "*Truce*" was an edict which prohibited all private wars from sunset every Wednesday till sunrise on the Monday following ; so that four days in the week were set apart from acts of violence, and space interposed for the operation of juster and more humane sentiments. After being proclaimed on more than one occasion earlier in the century, the *Truce of God* was finally and more effectually promulgated in 1095, at the Council of Clermont ; and although it did not long continue in force, it had a very beneficial effect. Henry had been moved by a senseless pride to discourage the efforts of the clergy when they endeavoured, in 1040, to make this enactment binding in the royal domain, alleging that in so doing they were encroaching on his authority.

Almost the only war he carried on himself, was one with the duke of Normandy, William, son of his early supporter, Robert the Magnificent,\* in which the Norman had very decidedly the advantage.

Henry I. died in 1060, after a reign of twenty-nine years. Warned by his father's experience, he was so fearful lest he might unknowingly take to wife a lady remotely akin to him, that he sent to the very extremity of Europe to find a princess for his consort ; and married Anna, daughter of the grand-duke of Russia, Yaroslof. This is the first occasion on which we find the court of Russia brought into connection with Western Europe. Yaroslof was the son of the first Christian grand-duke, and the legislator of his dominions.

\* This duke was also known by the very different title of "*Robert the Devil*," on account of his excessively violent temper, and also because he was suspected of having poisoned his brother and predecessor.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Philip I.—Institutions of Chivalry.—Norman Enterprise ; and Conquests in Italy, Sicily, England, &c.—Contests of Philip with his Vassals.—Degraded Character of Philip.—His son Louis.—Death of the King.—Henry of Burgundy founds the Kingdom of Portugal.—First Crusade preached at the Council of Clermont (1095).

FROM 1060 A.D. TO 1108.

HENRY I. was succeeded by his son Philip, a child of seven years old, whose minority was committed to the able guardianship of Baldwin V., surnamed the Pious, earl of Flanders. Baldwin preserved his ward's throne from attack by being always on his guard against the great vassals of the Crown, while at the same time he carefully avoided giving them any offence. But although the early years of Philip's reign were not distinguished by any remarkable occurrence in the national history, enterprises were undertaken by the Normans during his minority, as also during the preceding reign, which led to important results in the history of Europe generally, and had no small influence eventually on the fortunes of France. And since these enterprises owed much to the rising spirit of chivalry, which was to give birth to many marvellous exploits during the middle ages, and to have a lasting effect upon the manners of Europe, it will be well to give some account of that system in this place ; for, like the feudal institutions, chivalry first appeared as a complete system in France.

“The origin of the institution of knighthood, which was the basis of chivalry, may be easily traced. The warriors of the ancient Gallic tribes who fought on horseback, and were more highly esteemed than the infantry, were called by the Romans *Equites*, or horsemen, a rank of soldiery



possessing considerable precedence over others. The Germans approached the modern ideas of knighthood more closely. The youth was not accounted fit for sharing the councils of his tribe until the age of twenty-one, when, certain ceremonies being used, he was brought into the public assembly, invested with arms resembling those of his elder brethren, and admitted to all the privileges of an adult warrior. From this time the young man's consequence was much increased, his admission into the councils of freemen and warriors qualifying him to act as a chief and principal in war, where his services hitherto had been only used as a private soldier and follower.

"These regulations led to the establishment of an order of champions among the Franks and other German nations who had settled in Gaul. Those who were ambitious to distinguish themselves by military exploits, in which number we may class almost all who held fiefs, whether of the sovereign or subjects, were carefully educated in horsemanship and in all warlike exercises. During this training, the young men, who were for the time called pages, resided as a part of the household of some man of rank, whose family was supposed to be a school of military discipline. When arrived at sufficient age, and able to support the duties of war, the page became an esquire, and waited immediately upon his lord in battle, or during travel, serving him as a close and confidential attendant, and always ready to peril his life for him. This, though a species of servitude, was not reckoned degrading; on the contrary, the candidate for the highest honours of chivalry was not accounted worthy of them until he had shown, by the patient obedience of years as a squire, that he was worthy to command others in the capacity of a knight. When esteemed fit for the rank, he was dubbed knight, a ceremony in which some things were taken from the ancient German mode of receiving the youths into the councils of the warriors.

"A sword was girded round the aspirant's body, spurs

were attached to his heels, the person by whom the ceremony was performed struck him on the shoulders with the flat of his naked sword ; and he was thus invested with a high military dignity, which, in a certain sense, placed him, however poor, on a level with the wealthiest and most powerful nobles ; for, *in theory*, all knights were equal, except in so far as they excelled each other in military fame. Other ceremonies were introduced by the clergy, who naturally desired to add the sanction of religion to so striking a solemnity. In many cases the young aspirant passed the night previous to his installation in the church, occupied in watching his arms and in prayer. He also took an oath to protect, at his utmost risk, the cause of the Catholic religion ; to redress by his valour such wrongs, and abolish such evil customs, as he might discover (a Herculean task at a time when almost every district groaned under the tyranny of some petty despot, who oppressed the poor without their having any one to appeal to) ; the protection of widows and orphans, and of women generally, in whatever rank of society, formed part of his obligations. And, lastly, the young knight swore fidelity to his superior lord, king or chief. By these means the order of knighthood was rendered, *in theory*, an association bound by oath to promote the discharge of all the social duties which religion enjoined.

“ It is not to be supposed that many of the knights thus created even approached the excellence which they were in this respect required to attain. But some, whose character in adhering to these vows recommended them to their contemporaries as very perfect examples of chivalry, obtained the general approbation of princes and people. He was most valued, however, who exposed himself to the most extravagant dangers in the support of his character for courage and conduct.

“ While the system of chivalry flourished, its institutions gave an air of romantic dignity and grandeur to the manners of the age ; stigmatizing all that was base and selfish, and encouraging the knights who would be held worthy of public applause to seek it by exhibiting the

purest faith and the most undaunted courage ; without being seduced from their purpose by the prospect of individual advantage, or deterred from it by the most alarming dangers. But there mingled with these generous aspirations much that was wild, extravagant, and even absolutely ridiculous. Every knight, for example, was expected to devote his affections to some lady, whom he was to serve for years, and with unaltered fidelity, although neither her rank in life nor her inclinations might entitle him to expect any regard from her in return ; nay, although the lady having conferred her hand on some other person, any such return could not even be innocently desired.

“The system of chivalry also involved the very grievous error of intrusting the guardianship of almost all civil rights to the decision of the sword ; so that it was scarcely possible for a man to obtain justice unless he was prepared to fight for it, or had some champion willing to do battle in his cause.

“The very sports of chivalry involved the risk of life. The tilts and tournaments in which the knights encountered each other with lances, each endeavouring to keep his own saddle while he unhorsed his antagonist, were their favourite pastime. The Church repeatedly denounced these entertainments as inhuman and unchristian, but they were solemnly practised nevertheless at the courts of the sovereigns of Europe, who displayed their magnificence in the splendour with which the feats of chivalry were performed in their presence. The encounter professed to be a friendly trial in arms, and the combatants usually expressed the utmost regard for each other, but this did not prevent the lives of many brave champions from being lost in a sport which was no mere imitation of war, but an actual battle in a modified form.” \*

In France the young warrior when admitted to the dignity of the new order was called *chevalier*, i. e. horseman ; the ancient name of *eques*, translated into the language of the country, being adopted to express the

\* Sir W. Scott's "History of France."

newly inaugurated knight. The courteous gallantry inculcated by chivalry, together with a certain tone of national and personal vanity which it was well calculated to foster, rendered it highly influential in France. Nor was it less congenial to the character of the Normans, whose long residence in a softer climate and more luxurious territory had in no wise impaired the daring courage which their fathers had brought with them from the frozen regions of the North ; although it had softened their manners, and inspired them with a keen taste for the arts and refinements of life. Filled with a love of adventure, which welcomed rather than repelled danger, the Norman knights held the first rank among those of Europe ; and the military expeditions which they undertook during the eleventh century resulted not only in many brilliant feats of arms, but in conquests which were as productive of solid advantages, as they were gratifying to the national love of martial fame.

When the feeble descendants of Charlemagne proved unable to retain the empire he had won, the towns and coasts of Italy became divided between the Greeks (who reclaimed the possession of that country as the original seat of the empire which Constantine had removed from Rome to Byzantium) and the Saracens. The latter people had conquered and colonized Sicily. The southern regions of Italy next invited their arms, and a strong Saracen colony maintained at Bari, placed the Adriatic under the command of their naval power. The Greeks, more politic than warlike, and enervated by luxury, were unable of themselves to stand before the fiery Eastern fanatics ; but by the daring courage of Franks, Normans, and other auxiliaries, whom they enlisted in their cause, they recovered Bari, and established their authority over a considerable portion of eastern Italy. The Normans, however, began to meditate driving out both Greeks and Saracens, and conquering territory on their own account. In the year 1029 they fixed their headquarters at Aversa, where they lived under the government of chiefs of their own election, and, joining their forces with

those of the Greek emperor, did much to achieve the reconquest of Sicily. Being ungratefully requited by the emperor's general, they took up arms to punish the ingratitude of their allies. Their whole forces only amounted to seven hundred horse and five hundred foot, the Greek troops numbered sixty thousand ; yet in the course of three years the empire only retained possession of four towns on the coast. All the rest of Apulia had passed into the hands of the Normans, who divided their conquests into twelve districts, under the command of an equal number of counts, chief amongst whom was William, son of Tancred de Hauteville, a Norman gentleman of small property, whose twelve sons went forth in succession from their father's castle, impelled by the love of adventure or of gain.

Three in succession ruled over Apulia and Calabria ; the fourth brother, Robert, surnamed *Guiscard*, made open war on the emperor of the East, Alexius Comnenus, and defeated him both by land and sea ; another brother, Roger, conquered Sicily from the Saracens. Many brilliant feats of individual valour distinguished these wars ; and Europe was ringing with their fame, when William of Normandy laid claim to the crown of England, on the death of Edward the Confessor.

The regent Baldwin, who was also the father-in-law of Duke William, was well pleased that his exceedingly able and ambitious son-in-law should engage in an enterprise which would leave him neither leisure nor inclination to encroach on the domain of France. He gave him every facility, therefore, for inviting the aid of all knights and soldiers in the kingdom who wished to gain honour or wealth ; and a great multitude of warriors from all parts of France hastened to range themselves under the Norman banner. King Philip was at this time only fourteen, but as soon as he became old enough to understand the immense advantages which had accrued to William by the conquest of England, he conceived a great jealousy of his powerful vassal. By nature indolent, and given up, even in his prime, to sloth and debauchery, he



perceived the danger to which he was exposed by the near neighbourhood of a prince whose indefatigable energy equalled his genius, and whose own territory afforded easy ingress into the very heart of the royal domain ; and he hated to rouse himself to the effort necessary for holding his own in full honour and security.

Philip's disinclination for martial enterprise was perhaps increased by the ill success of his first attempt, which was made for the laudable purpose of succouring the widow of his guardian against her brother, Robert the Frison, by whom she had been despoiled. The young king armed on this occasion, and encountered Robert at Cassel, but was ignominiously defeated. From this time, most of his warlike operations were confined to contests with petty vassals in his own duchy of France, who were little, if at all, better than titled chiefs of banditti. Thus, between Paris and Etampes rose the stronghold of the lord of Montlhéry ; on the road to Orleans, that of Puiset ; between Paris and Melun, the castle of Corbeil ; nearer still to the capital, was the lord of Montmorency ; besides several others, who on all sides attacked travellers journeying peaceably along the highways, making no account of the royal safe-conduct with which they were provided ; and plundered, murdered, or held them captive till ransomed, at their own lawless pleasure. It cost the king and his successor years of warfare to reduce these brigand lords, and to obtain possession even of a few of the castles which had been turned into very dens of robbers.

Philip was, however, involved in a lingering indecisive struggle with the Normans, for the possession of the territory called the *Vexin*. A coarse jest which he uttered concerning William being repeated to the latter, the smouldering strife was fanned into a flame, and the Norman conqueror revenged the insult he had received by wasting Philip's town and territory of Mantes, and was designing to carry hostilities much farther when death overtook him, much to the joy of the French king, who



apprehended no disturbance from William's heedless, good-natured successor in the duchy, Robert.

After this time, Philip's conduct became more openly scandalous than before. He put away his own wife, Bertha, and took in her stead Bertrade, the wife of Fulk *the Morose*, count of Anjou ; nor could the admonitions of pope or council, or the excommunication which was pronounced against both parties, induce the king to separate from her. By this conduct the authority of Philip became as much degraded as his personal character, and the state was thrown into confusion by the contempt which even the king's immediate vassals entertained for him.

He appeased these disturbances, in some degree, by appointing Prince Louis, the only surviving son of his rightful queen, Bertha, his partner in the throne ; for Louis, whose disposition was the reverse of his father's, displayed great activity in remedying the effects of his misgovernment, and won the general esteem by his prudence and energy.

To Bertrade alone his conduct was unacceptable ; and she exerted her influence over Philip to prejudice him against his son. When Louis went to England to be present at the coronation of Henry I., and to be dubbed a knight by him, Bertrade procured a letter to be written to Henry in Philip's name, and sealed with the royal seal, requesting that the prince might be arrested, and detained in England. Henry, shocked that so unknighly and inhospitable an action should be required of him, gave the letter to Louis, and advised him to return at once, and look well to his safety. Philip disavowed the letter ; but the dangers of the prince were not over ; a slow poison was administered to him, which threatened the total destruction of his health. On receiving this new injury, he was well nigh provoked to break entirely with his father, and it is probable that the support of the kingdom generally would have been with him. But Philip became aware of his perilous position, and Bertrade found it necessary to seek reconciliation with the prince by making the most humble submission to him.

In his last years the king, being sorely afflicted with pain and infirmity, acknowledged himself guilty and grievously deserving the chastisement of God.

He put off his royal apparel ; desired that he might not be buried amongst the kings, as undeserving of a place of honour, and died in much fear and anguish of mind, in the year 1108, after a reign of forty-eight years.

Great events had taken place during this inglorious reign, in which France was largely concerned, though her sovereign had not participated in them. A constant warfare was maintained between the Christians and Mussulmans in Spain. Alfonso VI. of Castile and Leon had recovered from the infidels Toledo the ancient Gothic capital ; but having suffered, in 1086, a disastrous defeat, entreated the king of France to help him. The slothful Philip was deaf to his appeal, but a number of French knights embraced Alfonso's cause, and assisted him to drive back the Mussulmans ; and the French king's cousin, Henry of Burgundy, distinguished himself so greatly in the contest, that Alfonso bestowed on him, with the hand of his daughter, a principality which Henry, after many victorious battles, enlarged and strengthened, and made the origin and foundation of the kingdom of Portugal. His son, Alfonso I., was the first who bore the royal title.

But the wars waged during the whole of the eleventh century against the Mussulmans in Italy and in Spain, were all as nothing, compared with the enterprise which, four years before its close, called forth all the chivalry of Europe to unite in one great effort against the common enemy of the Christian faith. It was in the reign of Philip I., at a council held at Clermont in Auvergne, in 1095, that a French pope, Urban II., preached the first crusade ; sounding, says a Church historian, "that blast which shook the whole fabric of society, from the extremities of the West, even to the heart of Asia, for above two centuries."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

State of the Church: Rise of the Papal Power.—Pretensions of Gregory VII.: his Policy carried out by his Successors.—Council of Clermont (1095).—The First Crusade.

BEFORE proceeding with the history of Louis VI. and his successors, it will be desirable to glance at some circumstances of ecclesiastical history, with which that of France and other European states is more or less connected. In most of the kingdoms of Europe, the relations between the clergy and their native sovereigns had undergone a change during the last two centuries. The clergy had become more subject to secular authority. Anxious to provide for the safety of the lands which had been bestowed on them, they had become vassals of the lords and princes in whose territories their domains lay. At the same time, they had acquired much secular power and authority in their own character of feudal lords. The bishops were not merely the lords of the city which was their episcopal seat, but also suzerains of several considerable baronies and lordships. The great abbots likewise were lords of the towns in which their abbeys were situated, and of other fiefs.\* The abbots of St. Germain,

\* By a singular effect of the feudal system, the kings of France were vassals of the abbots of St. Denis for the fief of the *Verin*. The banner of the abbey, famous in French history under the name of the *Oriflamme*, was the standard beneath which the sovereign and his troops fought when they went forth to war; and the cry "Montjoie and St. Denis" was the war-cry of the French army. At the close of a war the king carried back the oriflamme with great pomp and solemnity, and deposited it on the altar of the abbey church. It took its name from the colour and shape of the standard—a flame-coloured flag, cut out at the lower end in the shape of tongues of fire, and fastened to a staff covered with gold.

St. Geneviève, and St. Victor, were each suzerains of a considerable portion of Paris ; the abbot of Fécamp was lord of ten baronies ; the abbot of St. Martin of Tours had twenty thousand serfs on his vast domains : and there were very many other princely ecclesiastics.\* Most of the French bishops held fiefs of the Crown ; and in the time of Philip I. the dignities and offices of the Church had become objects of traffic, adjudged to the men who bid highest for them ; for Philip was always in need of money for his dissolute pleasures, and sought it by this means.

In Germany likewise the grossest simony was practised. The injury which such a state of things inflicted on religion and morals was obvious. But besides this most important consideration, the rulers of the Church resented the subjection of the clergy to temporal princes. The election of the popes themselves had for a long while been disgraced by popular turbulence, or by the scandalous intrigues which influenced the choice of the electors ; and at length the emperors had sometimes claimed the right of nominating the popes, as well as of confirming their election.

\* In the 12th century France possessed 2,000 monasteries. The very famous abbeys of *Cluny* and of *Cîteaux* were founded one in the 10th, the other in the 11th century, in Burgundy ; that of *Clairvaux*, in Champagne, very early in the 12th century ; that of *La Chartreuse*, in Dauphiné, in the 11th.

*Suger*, abbot of St. Denis, in the reigns of Louis VI. and Louis VII., is numbered amongst the most illustrious of French statesmen ; the son of a poor serf, his talents, learning, and probity raised him to the highest post in the state. But the most famous churchman of that age was St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, the founder, by his own exertions, of 160 monasteries. "But the influence of St. Bernard was not confined to his monastic progeny ; it displayed itself in all grand ecclesiastical transactions, in France, in Germany, in Italy—from the altars of the church it spread to courts and parliaments. And as it was founded on reputation, not on dignity—as it stood on no other ground than his wisdom and sanctity—so was it generally exerted for good purposes, and always for purposes which, according to the principles of that age, were accounted good." (See *Waddington's History of the Church*, pp. 325—334, &c.)

In the eleventh century, the power and the pretensions of the Papal court had advanced greatly. In the pontificate of Nicholas II. it was established in a synod that the popes were to be chosen by the cardinal bishops (those whose sees were near Rome), and approved of by the cardinal priests (or ministers of the parish churches of Rome) and the people, and then presented for confirmation to the emperor. Hildebrand, archdeacon of Rome, was the author of this plan, the object of which was gradually to free the Papacy from imperial control. On the death of Nicholas he had a fresh pope chosen and consecrated without waiting for the sanction of the emperor. On the next vacancy he was himself raised to the pontificate under the title of Gregory VII. (1073), and though he refused to be consecrated till he had obtained the consent of the emperor, Henry IV., he none the less pursued his design of humbling the imperial crown beneath his feet.

He had, in fact, conceived the plan of an universal theocracy administered by the Pope, in which all civil rulers were to be treated as merely subordinate and removable officers. The arguments by which he supported these astonishing pretensions have been summarized as follows, in successive steps of reasoning, each of which seems to be a natural consequence of that which precedes it.

Since it was undoubtedly right that the Church should exercise the power of expelling delinquent members, or those whose conduct occasioned scandal to their brethren, it would be absurd that civil rank and authority should involve exemption from an ecclesiastical censure. But as the faithful were forbidden to hold intercourse with any man excommunicated, they could scarcely perform any active duty towards him. It therefore became unfit for the subjects of an excommunicated king to obey him in peace or to serve him in war; and when the Sovereign Pontiff expressly absolved them from their allegiance, he seemed only to be warning his children against the neces-



sary consequence of acting under the commands of a man who was excluded, on account of his wickedness, from participating in sacred ordinances. Another reason, equally simple as it seemed, was this : In the many contests arising between different states, or between subjects and their rulers, it was often difficult to determine on which side justice lay. Now as it was their moral duty to satisfy their conscience on that question before they proceeded to actual war, whom could they consult more likely to give a wise and impartial answer than the common father of all Christian people ?

It was becoming, then, that a king should recur in great difficulties to the general guide and confessor of Christians, just as in ordinary affairs he would seek the advice of the private priest, or confessor, who directed his conscience. And if it was becoming that the kings of the earth should consult the Pope before they resolved on making war, it must be right that the Pope should offer his mediation to prevent the effusion of Christian blood. Should either of the contending parties reject his good offices in that behalf, the very rejection naturally indicated a consciousness that they were in the wrong ; and if they persisted in their refusal of his mediation, it might become his duty to punish their contumacy by spiritual censures and excommunication. Moreover, it was the duty of the Pope to take care that the acts of civil governments should not endanger the safety of the Church. He alone could judge of the reality and extent of the danger, and he had no effectual means of defending the Church but by excluding enemies from her communion.

As a further consequence of this reasoning, it followed that, as all subjects who abetted the aggressions of their sovereigns against the spiritual power were accomplices in their crime, the Pope might punish them, and defend himself, by laying the whole dominions of such delinquent princes under an interdict.

Under an interdict the public offices of worship were suspended ; the very doors of the churches were kept



closed ; no marriage or funeral rites were suffered to be performed, nor any other ordinances of religion, excepting baptism, confession, and extreme unction. And since the public exercise of religion constituted in those days with the mass of the people their only means of religious instruction or consolation, the sentence of an interdict must have fallen on them like an edict of rejection and separation from Heaven. It was attended also by other prohibitions, not of a religious nature, but calculated to deepen the gloom which it inspired ; for instance, the hair and beard were to be left unshaven, the use of meat was forbidden, and even the ordinary salutation between friends and neighbours was prohibited.

The terrible powers which Gregory thus claimed in theory, he proceeded, as far as he had opportunity, to assert in practice. Several subjects of discord had arisen between the Pope and the emperor, Henry IV., and the latter was disturbed and weakened by civil dissensions, arising partly from his own vicious rule. It was not long before Gregory took occasion to excommunicate him, and to pronounce likewise that Henry had forfeited his kingdoms of Germany and Italy, and that his subjects were absolved from their oath of allegiance. From thence he proceeded a step further, and conferred the crown on another prince, disposing of the empire with absolute authority as a fief of St. Peter. His extraordinary claims were advanced in every state of Europe. The kingdom of France was declared tributary to the See of Rome, and annual payment of the tribute was demanded by virtue of the obedience due to that see by every Frenchman. And the king himself (Philip I.) was reminded that both his kingdom and his soul were under the dominion of St. Peter, who had the power to *bind* and to *loose* both in Heaven and on earth. It was pretended that the kingdom of Spain had been the property of the Holy See from the earliest ages of Christianity. William the Conqueror was informed that he held England as a fief of the court of Rome, and in subjection to it. From

Denmark to Dalmatia every prince was either solicited to subject his state to the suzerainty of St. Peter, or reminded that he was actually in subjection to him ; that is, to his representative and successor, the Pope.

Various success attended these attempts of Gregory. In France, Philip refused the tribute demanded of him. William, in England, consented to the tribute, but disclaimed allegiance. For his contest with the emperor, Gregory had strengthened himself by knitting closely his alliance with the Norman conquerors of Southern Italy, who held all their possessions there as fiefs of the Pope ; and he had also prevailed on Matilda, the heiress of the duke of Tuscany, to make over her extensive territories to the apostle Peter, and hold them on feudal tenure from his successors. But after various changes of fortune he was compelled to retire from Rome to Salerno, where he died (1085), without having witnessed the perfect accomplishment of any portion of that portentous project of universal domination which had been the aim of his life. But he left behind him his spirit, his example, and his principles ; and they continued for many generations to animate the policy of his successors. In a succeeding age we find another pope of extraordinary talents and unscrupulous ambition, Innocent III., filling up the outline daringly sketched by Gregory ; proclaiming “ that he would not endure the least contempt of himself, or of God, whose place he held on earth, but would punish every disobedience without delay, and convince the whole world that he was determined to act like a sovereign : ” publishing a bull which declared “ that it was not fit that any man should be invested with authority who did not serve and obey the Holy See ; ” and in the endeavour to carry out his designs, urging and inflaming the rage of persecution with a barbarity which has nothing resembling it in the conduct of Gregory VII.

Amongst the schemes which Gregory had contemplated, was that of personally leading the united warriors of Christendom against the Mahometan conquerors of the

Holy Land. He had never found means of accomplishing this project. It was reserved for one of his successors in the pontificate, a Frenchman, Pope Urban II., to summon all the nations of Europe to war against the infidel.

From the commencement of the fourth century, and perhaps earlier, it had become the practice of Christians to make pilgrimages to the places hallowed by the life and death of the Redeemer. Even when Palestine, early in the seventh century, fell into the hands of the Mahometans, no serious difficulty was opposed to these pilgrimages for some hundred years. A caliph who ruled Egypt and Syria, about the year 1009, forbade the resort of pilgrims, and destroyed the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem ; but this persecution ceased with his death, and pilgrims, warned by the outrages they had suffered, generally travelled afterwards in bodies able and willing to defend themselves, if assailed.

But about the year 1076, the Egyptian rule in Palestine was overthrown by the adherents of the caliph of Bagdad, among whom were a savage race from central Asia, called Turkmans, and to these people and their leader, Ortok, was committed the charge of Jerusalem. From this time, both the pilgrims and the native Christians were treated with every indignity and cruelty ; and the recital of their wrongs, spread throughout Christendom by an eye-witness and fellow-sufferer, Peter, a hermit of Picardy, kindled a flame of grief and indignation, which spread with wonderful rapidity through all ranks and conditions of people.

In November, 1095, Pope Urban II. convoked a great council at Clermont in Auvergne. It was attended by an immense multitude of laity as well as clergy ; amongst whom were many illustrious warriors, nobles, and princes. All these he earnestly exhorted to avenge the cause of their afflicted brethren, and rescue the Holy Land out of the hands of infidel usurpers. "Arm yourselves, my children, with the zeal of God ; march to

the succour of our brethren, and the Lord be with you. Turn against the enemy of the Christian name the arms which you employ in injuring each other. Redeem by a service so agreeable to God your pillages, conflagrations, homicides, and other mortal crimes, so as to obtain His ready pardon. We exhort and enjoin you, for the remission of your sins, to have pity on the affliction of our brethren in Jerusalem, and to repress the insolence of the infidels, who propose to subjugate kingdoms and empires, and to extinguish the name of Christ. Gird on your swords, ye men of valour : it is our part to pray, it is yours to fight. It is ours with Moses to hold up our hands unremittingly to God : it is yours to stretch out the sword against the children of Amalek—so be it.” And the assembly answered, as if to a summons sounded from Heaven—“It is the will of God—it is the will of God !” Thousands devoted themselves on the spot to the recovery of Palestine from the hands of the Turks, and put a cross upon their garments as a symbol of their consecration to the holy war. So great was the eagerness, that some of the princes who were present cut their robes to pieces, to furnish crosses for the multitudes who pressed forward to enlist in this service.

The news of these proceedings spread with unexampled rapidity through the whole of civilized Europe, and were received with enthusiastic interest and applause. Every feeling conspired to rouse the warlike spirit of the age : the belief that all sins might be atoned for by engaging in the crusade ; the love of glory and adventure ; the hope of conquering kingdoms, in those Eastern lands of whose wealth and fertility they had heard marvels ; sympathy for brethren barbarously wronged ; reverence for the scenes of sacred story, dear and hallowed in their eyes from infancy ; zeal to defend the undisturbed exercise of their religious worship.

Robert, duke of Normandy, Hugh, brother of the king of France, Raymond, count of Toulouse, Godfrey, duke of Brabant and of Bouillon, with his brothers

Eustace and Baldwin, Stephen, count of Blois, Bohemond, the son of Robert Guiscard, were the chief leaders; and an immense number of all ranks and ages crowded to the sacred standard. Even old men, women, and children, set out eagerly for Jerusalem. Three hundred thousand persons of the poorer class straggled on before, under the guidance of Peter the Hermit, and a knight called Walter the Moneyless. In their passage through Hungary and Bulgaria, part were massacred by the inhabitants, whom they had pillaged: and the rest on entering Asia were slaughtered by the Turks. The great army, in which marched the flower of the knights of Europe, followed, and poured into Constantinople to the dismay of the emperor Alexius, who trembled for his own tottering throne in the presence of these iron legions from every corner of the West. When assembled before the walls of Nicæa, they numbered 600,000 combatants. They gained two great victories over the Turks, and took every city which lay in their way to Antioch, of which city Bohemond was made prince. Baldwin, at the call of the Christians inhabiting Edessa, crossed the Euphrates, and assumed the sovereignty of that city.

In the meantime, the vizier of the Egyptian caliph had recovered Jerusalem from the Turks; and the Crusaders were informed, that if they came unarmed they might now perform their vows at the holy places in security; and, also, that pilgrims would henceforward be unmolested, as in former time. But the Crusaders rejected the offer, and in June, 1099, laid siege to the city. At the end of six weeks it was stormed, and the garrison and inhabitants, to the number of 70,000 persons, were put to death, without respect to age or sex. Dearth of provisions, scarcity of water, disease, and other causes, had so reduced the number of the Christian host, that of the vast multitudes who had crossed the Bosphorus, but 1,500 horse and 20,000 foot appeared before Jerusalem.

Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen king by his fellow

warriors ; but he refused to bear the kingly title, or to assume any crown, but one of thorns, in the kingdom of the Son of David. The land was partitioned into fiefs, and a code of feudal regulations was drawn up for the administration of it. Afterwards, two religious orders of knights were instituted for the better defence of the kingdom. Before the time of the Crusade, there had been a society for attending sick pilgrims in the hospital of St. John. Hugo des Payens, a knight of the house of Champagne, and eight others, formed themselves into an order named Templars, from their house near the site of the Temple of Solomon. They took vows to defend pilgrims, and also of obedience, poverty, and celibacy. St. Bernard, at the desire of the king of France and other princes, drew up a rule for them. In battle, they engaged to be the first in action, the last in retreat. This example was followed by the brethren of the Hospital ; and a new order, the Teutonic, was soon added to these military and religious associations. The Christian empire which the Crusaders had established, extended from the borders of Armenia to those of Egypt ; but it was feeble, and encompassed by powerful enemies. Its population, though brave, was very scanty ; and its chief reliance was on the aid of Europe.



## CHAPTER XIX.

Wars of Louis VI.: Contest with Henry I.—Civic Freedom in Flanders: Revolt of Bruges.—Enfranchisement of Towns in France: the Story of Laon.—Louis *the Young*: marries Eleanora of Aquitaine.—Death of Louis VI. (1137).—Enlargement of Royal Domain.

FROM 1108 A.D. TO 1137.

LOUIS VI., surnamed *the Fat*, and *the Fighter*, from the qualities which most prominently distinguished his person and his reign, forced his unruly vassals to pay him respect by the vigour of his arm; though his wars, which were chiefly directed against the powerful feudatories whose domains surrounded his own, were neither very honourable in their origin, nor successful in their course. His most formidable antagonist was Henry I. of England and Normandy. In the hope of diminishing the Anglo-Norman power, by the severance of these dominions, Louis espoused the cause of William Clito, the son of Duke Robert, whom Henry had dispossessed of Normandy. But the French king was entirely defeated at the battle of Brenneville (1119).\*

Eight years afterwards, to the great vexation of Louis, Matilda, Henry's daughter and heiress, espoused Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou; and the Anglo-Norman domination was thus extended to the Loire. Still, however, hoping to raise up a rival to Henry or to his

\* In as far as the *knights* were concerned, this battle deserves rather to be called a *tilt*; for out of 900 who were engaged, only *three* were slain—so well did their armour defend them, and so intent were all parties on making prisoners of their knightly antagonists, that they might enrich themselves by the money paid to ransom the captives.

successor, he placed William Clito, to whom he had given the queen's sister in marriage, in possession of the earldom of Flanders, the greatest fief of the French crown. The last earl had been murdered by the burgesses of Bruges, incensed at their lord's determination to reduce the principal amongst them to a state of serfdom. Already, in those days, Flanders boasted many industrious and wealthy cities, inhabited by men who loved freedom, and strove hard to resist the feudal tyranny which asserted its claim to domineer over their persons and their property. Amongst its townsmen were many serfs, or descendants of serfs, who had never been formally manumitted, but who, by long continuance in some branch of skilled industry or trade, had acquired wealth, and with it a greater degree of comfort and domestic civilization than was to be found amongst their neighbours in France or Germany.

The last earl, Charles, in an evil hour had conceived the design of reducing all these citizens to servitude ; and even freemen who had married the daughters of serfs were to be now made bondmen, if claimed by the owners of their wives within a year and a day. (For, by a law or custom antecedent to the feudal system, any serf who dwelt a year and a day in a city without being reclaimed by his lord, was entitled to the privileges of a free citizen.)

The provost of Bruges, who was the most important and wealthiest person in the province, next to the earl himself, and whose nephews and nieces were allied by marriage to the chief families of the country, was amongst the number of the serfs, whose industry and conduct had long since obliterated all recollection of their servile origin in the minds of their freeborn fellow-citizens. His indignation, and that of his numerous powerful connections, at the tyranny which proposed to deprive them of their dearest privileges, led to a conspiracy, which issued in the assassination of the earl while he knelt in prayer at church.

The murder, aggravated by the sacrilege, raised all the country. The deceased earl was elevated to the rank of a *Saint*. The men of Ghent, jealous of the rival power and opulence of Bruges, came in arms to demand his corpse as a sacred relic; and all the chivalry of Flanders armed for or against the conspirators.

Louis, as suzerain of Flanders, came with William Clito at the head of a considerable force, and obliged them at length to surrender themselves. The leaders were put to death with horrible tortures; the rest were thrown from the top of the tower of Bruges, and Clito was installed in the earldom. But the burgesses of Ghent, Lille, Alost, &c., were alarmed for their liberties, seeing the excessive cruelty which had crushed out the insurrection. They obtained the aid of Dietrich, count of Alsace, and attacked Clito, who died of a wound received at the siege of Alost. With him perished the influence of Louis VI. in Flanders.

He had witnessed with no friendly eye the struggles of some chief towns in France itself to obtain the power of self-government. Noyon, St. Quentin, and others, had, by much pains and at the price of large sums of money, won from the lords in whose fiefs they lay, liberty to elect their own magistrates. The contest which *Laon* maintained for this end occupies a notable place in the history of the reign of Louis, and affords a lively picture of the state of society at that time.

Laon, in the beginning of the twelfth century, was one of the largest and most industrious towns in the duchy of France. The bishop of the see was its feudal lord; and in 1108, Naudrie, a Norman in the service of Henry I., obtained the bishopric at the price of a large sum of money. Naudrie was a huntsman, a soldier, a freebooter—anything rather than a priest,—and the unfortunate town groaned beneath his tyranny. This wolf in sheep's clothing was in the habit of visiting England, that he might enrich himself there likewise by plunder;

and during one of these absences, the men of Laon, taking courage by the success which had attended the citizens of Noyon, drew up a scheme of municipal government, swore together to observe it faithfully, and, by means of a large gift of money, induced the clergy of the city and the neighbouring knights and nobles to promise that they likewise would respect the rights and office of the newly elected magistrates.

The bishop was furious, when he returned, to find a mayor and twelve *jurors*, or *assessors*, administering the affairs of their fellow-citizens, instead of a body of serfs, without union or leaders, lying at his mercy, as heretofore. But the men of Laon promptly soothed his anger by proposing to buy their recently-acquired privileges of him ; and having presented several hundred pounds of silver to the bishop, and a similar sum to the king, as the suzerain-in-chief of Laon and its territory, they dwelt for a short time unmolested, and preserved order in their town. But when Louis and Naudrie had each of them spent the price of the city's freedom, the bishop offered to give the king a great sum if he would uphold him in revoking the charter he had granted only three years before ; and Louis, always intent on getting money, consented.

The citizens, getting intelligence of this breach of faith, went to the king, offering to buy their charter over again ; but they could not offer so large a bribe as the bishop, and the highest bidder won the day. The charter of Laon was recalled, and the lately enfranchised townsmen returned to their former position of serfs, whom their lord could pillage and oppress at pleasure. Naudrie made immediate use of his restored jurisdiction to exact a heavy tribute ; but the bad faith of their rulers had excited the wrath of the people, and a furious insurrection was the result. The bishop was besieged in his own house, his servants and defenders slain, himself tracked to a cellar, where he lay hidden in an empty wine-cask. Dragged along the streets, amidst execrations

and shouts of "*Isengrin ! Isengrin !*" (*master wolf*), the miserable man was overwhelmed with blows, till one of his tormentors, more merciful than the rest, clove his skull with an axe. The people then turned their fury against the surviving nobles of Naudrie's party. "Murder, burning, and crime, in every form, reigned in the city ; till, wearied with their own excesses, and dreading the punishment which was certain to follow, the chief actors in the sedition sought refuge with Thomas de Marle, the lord of Crécy, whom they had prevailed on to defend their cause."

Sixteen years' warfare between the contending parties followed. De Marle was speedily overcome by the king, his castle taken, and all the insurgents who were found there slaughtered, and cast out unburied to the beasts and birds of prey. But crimes and horrors indescribable on both sides followed in long succession ; Laon, in the mean time, being utterly ruined, until the strife at last ended where it had begun, in a formal acknowledgment and confirmation of the municipal rights of this indomitable city.

Little as Louis VI. was inclined to favour civic liberty, his reign is marked by French historians as the era from which to date the enfranchisement of the principal towns, some or all of which had in older times enjoyed rights and liberties of which the feudal system had deprived them ; for even the lords who had solemnly promised certain privileges to the townsmen of their fiefs, in order to induce men from other places to migrate thither, broke their engagements without shame when they had attained their object, and disposed of the property, liberty, and lives of the citizens at their own arbitrary will, till their tyranny became insupportable. But when the knights and nobles of the land went forth to the Crusades, it behoved them to raise money by every means to provide for the expense of so difficult, distant, and protracted an enterprise. They sold many things, therefore, and amongst others, civic rights, which at any other

time they would have died rather than have conferred ; and the king, in consideration of the money with which the citizens presented him, confirmed the charters granted by the lords. But Louis granted no such charters to the towns situated in his own domains.

The privileges conferred by these municipal charters were chiefly these :—The citizens gained the right of arming in their own defence when attacked ; of apportioning their taxes ; of electing their mayor and other officers ; and of holding courts of justice for the trial of offenders within their own precincts. Communities which had acquired these rights were distinguished as *communes*.

In the latter years of his reign, Louis associated his son in the government with himself ; and the young king took the name of Louis the Young, to distinguish him from his father. He married, in 1137, the beautiful Eleanora of Aquitaine, the granddaughter and heiress of Duke William. Eleanora's father had joined the crusading princes in the Holy Land five years before, and had fallen there in battle. Duke William, anxious to abdicate his sovereignty that he might go on pilgrimage, caused his granddaughter to be recognized as his successor ;\* and having married her in her sixteenth year to the young king Louis, crowned them duke and duchess of Aquitaine, and laid aside his royal garments for a hermit's cowl and staff. He died shortly after setting out on his penitential journey, and Louis VI. lived but a few days after the return of his son from Aquitaine. With his last breath he bade his successor "remember that royalty was a public trust, for the exercise of which he would have to give strict account to the King of kings."

Louis VI. died in August, 1137, having reigned twenty-nine years. He had so far succeeded in his numerous

\* The Salic law had no force in Aquitaine, where female heirs inherited all the rights of feudal sovereignty ; received homage, dispensed justice, and led their vassals to war.



struggles with refractory vassals, that he was at least master in fact, as well as in name, of his own domain, which had been somewhat enlarged since the time of Hugh Capet, by the acquisition of Berri, besides some smaller territories. And he died in the belief that his son's marriage had insured the union of the fine countries south of the Loire to the domain of the Crown ; but this expectation, as we shall presently see, proved deceptive.

## CHAPTER XX.

Second Crusade, led by Louis VII. and Conrad of Germany.—Its unfortunate issue and termination.—Divorce of Louis and Eleanora.—The latter espouses Henry Plantagenet.—Conflicts of Henry and Louis.—Louis visits the Shrine of Becket.—His Death (1180).

FROM 1137 A.D. TO 1180.

THE most memorable event of the reign of Louis VII. is the second Crusade, preached with marvellous effect by St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, and led by the king in person. Louis was a prince of warlike character, but he had an especial reason for taking the cross. While warring with the earl of Champagne, he had fired the town of Vitry, and burned the church, in which thirteen hundred persons had taken refuge. The recollection of this frightful massacre stung Louis with remorse ; and he eagerly embraced the hope of expiating his crime by doing battle with the infidels. Edessa had been taken by the Turks, and all the inhabitants put to the sword ; and this, with other reverses, awakened in Europe a strong feeling of indignation and sympathy for the afflicted Christians of the East. Conrad III. in Germany, and Louis VII. in France, determined to lead a crusade for their relief ; and the eloquent voice of St. Bernard prevailed on vast multitudes to join in the expedition.

The gentry and nobility of France took arms in emulation of each other ; and whole villages were deprived of their labourers, women and children alone remaining to till the ground. The same spirit animated the people of Germany, where Conrad assembled a great army of all ranks, including a band of women armed and riding like men. Their leader was called, from her gilt spurs and

buskins, *the golden-footed*. A similar absurdity was witnessed in the French host, where the part of the golden-footed lady was performed by no less a personage than Queen Eleanor herself, accompanied by a band of Amazons, whose presence by no means improved the discipline of the army.

Happily for France, Louis possessed a very wise and upright minister, Suger, abbot of St. Denis, to whom he committed the government during his absence. The Germans had already set forward, when Louis, on Whit-Sunday, 1147, received the oriflamme at St. Denis, and began his march eastward, in sanguine expectation of splendid victories. But the result of this crusade was most disastrous.

Manuel Comnenus, the emperor of Constantinople, dreaded the neighbourhood of the Crusaders more than that of the Turks and Saracens, and while pretending friendship and alliance, was secretly doing all he could to ensure the destruction of the Christian armies, and conveying information of their movements to the enemy. Misled by false guides, Conrad lost, in the defiles of Taurus, the bravest of his soldiers. The majority of those who remained, worn out with sickness and hardship, perished at the siege of Iconium; and when the survivors reached Nicæa, they did not amount to a tenth of the force who had left the city, a few weeks before, in all the exultation of health and hope. In the mean time, the French had arrived; and the two sovereigns embraced in sorrowful silence. They agreed to proceed in company to Palestine; and, at first, Louis had some success. Nevertheless, the Crusaders suffered extremely before they made any effectual progress in Asia Minor; and when they reached the mountains near Laodicea, Louis, embarrassed by the wilful folly of his young queen and her ladies, found himself involved in an ambuscade, where the Turks attacked him at so great disadvantage that he lost more than half his army. The unfortunate king displayed great courage, and forced his

way through the enemy to the very summit of the heights amidst which they had attacked him. Here, however, he was left almost alone ; his bravest knights being slain at his feet. In this emergency, finding himself at the foot of a rock, he climbed up a tree which grew slanting out of the face of the precipice. The Turks discharged their arrows against him in vain ; his armour of proof kept him safe, while he defended himself with his sword from the approach of such as attempted to climb into his place of refuge, wounding and killing not a few. In this perilous position he remained some hours, until extricated by a body of his troops who had escaped the ambuscade.

The day following this disastrous action, the French proceeded to Attalia, amidst constant skirmishing and great hardships. The natives, who were Christians, but tributary to the Turks, dared not assist them otherwise than by offering them shipping to Antioch, which was under the government of Raymond de Poitiers, the queen's uncle. Louis, accordingly, embarked at Attalia, with his principal knights and nobles ; the remainder of his army were left behind, and after making repeated unsuccessful attempts to rejoin him, they became so utterly dispirited and broken down, that between three and four thousand not only surrendered to the infidels, but embraced the Mahometan faith, and fought against the cause they had left their country to defend.

Raymond, in the mean time, had given both welcome and assistance to the king, and that portion of his force which had reached Antioch ; but the conduct of the queen became such as to give great displeasure and cause of jealousy to her husband, and Louis hastily retreated, bearing Eleanor with him on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he left her in safe guardianship, while, with the help of the Knights Templars and Hospitallers, and all other force which could be collected in Palestine, he laid siege to Damascus. Misfortune (and, it was suspected treason) pursued the Crusaders still ; the siege was ill-conducted, the army all but annihilated, and in the

autumn of 1149 Louis was forced to return almost alone to his kingdom.

There was an universal burst of lamentation and discontent, when it was known that the whole of that great army, for the equipment of which the king had exacted a very heavy tax, had perished without doing anything which could advance the Christian cause in Palestine. Louis, hoping perhaps to impose silence on the malcontents, made a solemn entry into Paris, with as much pomp as if he had been accomplishing a series of victories instead of encountering disaster and defeat; but he never regained his former popularity.

Dissensions had run high between the king and queen ever since their sojourn at Antioch. Louis suspected his wife of unfaithfulness, and desired to repudiate her, and Eleanora made no secret of her aversion to the ascetic habits and gloomy severity of her husband and his court. She had been reared in all the luxury and accomplishments of the South, was a fine musician, and a popular troubadour poet, but of very lax morals, a reproach which seems to have been too generally deserved by the princes and people of Aquitaine in that day. The Abbot Suger, unwilling to see the Crown weakened by the loss of Eleanora's dominions, endeavoured to avert a separation; but the mutual dislike of the king and his wife could not be softened, and within a few days of the abbot's death, they obtained a divorce from a council of the Church, held at Baugenci, March 1152, on the ground of consanguinity, Louis being cousin in the fourth degree to Eleanora.

Six weeks afterwards, the divorced queen married Henry Plantagenet; and the French king was transported with vexation and regret, at seeing the vast province of Aquitaine pass into the possession of the powerful vassal who already possessed Normandy, Anjou and Maine, Touraine and Poitou; and who shortly afterwards succeeded to the crown of England.

From this time, the chief aim of the kings who filled

the French throne, was that of arresting by every possible means, of arms, diplomacy, or cunning, the progress of the English power in France. Henry endeavoured for some years to maintain peace ; but war broke out in the end between the two kings, and Louis found a ready means of causing disquiet and irritation to his powerful rival, by extending favour to Thomas-à-Becket when he sought shelter in France from the wrath of his sovereign.

A few years later, the sons of Henry having rebelled against their father, Louis encouraged and assisted them in that unnatural war.

At the close of his reign he sought reconciliation with the king of England, in the hope that Henry might be induced to join him in a new Crusade, so earnestly was his imagination still bent upon the project which had occupied him in earlier years. He designed to provide for the government of the kingdom in his absence, by crowning his son Philip, who, though very young, gave promise of much firmness and sagacity, as his associate and successor in the throne. Philip, however, lost his way while hunting in what was then the vast forest of Compiègne, and after wandering about a day and night alone, was so worn out by the fatigue and exposure, that he fell dangerously ill. His father, in hope of obtaining his recovery, performed a pilgrimage to the shrine of Becket at Canterbury, bestowing on it rich offerings (amongst which tradition reports a carbuncle or diamond of extraordinary beauty, as large as a hen's egg, commonly called *La Reale of France*) ; and on the monastery a grant of a hundred tuns of French wine yearly.

Returning home immediately afterwards, Louis found his son recovered ; a circumstance which greatly increased the resort of pilgrims from afar to the shrine of Canterbury. But before the young prince could be crowned, Louis himself was struck with palsy, and died the following year, Sept. 1180.



## CHAPTER XXI.

Philip Augustus.—Early Measures of his Reign.—He takes the Cross.—His Jealousy of Richard I.—Returns to Europe to attack Richard's Dominions.—His Defeats.—Strife with King John, and support of Arthur of Brittany.—Possesses himself of Normandy, &c.—Battle of Bouvines (1214).—Prince Louis invited to England by the Barons.—University of Paris.—Death of Philip (1223).—Death of Louis VIII. (1226).

## FROM 1180 TO 1226 A.D.

PHILIP, surnamed Augustus, because he was born in the month of August, was only fourteen years of age when he ascended the throne, and one of his first actions was to promote a frightful persecution of the Jews, whom he caused to be despoiled of their goods and banished the country. Other measures which distinguished the opening of his reign, were of a far more creditable character, and bespoke the gravity and resolution of manhood, rather than the degree of reflection to be expected from a king in his fifteenth year.

The frequent wars by which France was agitated, sometimes between the king and refractory vassals, sometimes between the numerous lords, great and small, who held fiefs in the kingdom, had brought together numerous bands of mercenary soldiers, whose only living was their sword, and who, without distinction of country, or any regard to the cause in which they served, were ready to fight for whomsoever would employ them. In time of war, these men were often useful, in peace they were a most oppressive burden on the people of the realm : leading idle dissolute lives at the expense of the peasantry, and breaking every law which regulated society, without a possibility of bringing them to justice, except by a pitched

battle. Where their depredations were withstood, they drew their bands closer together, laid the country under contribution, and obliged the cities, on peril of assault and pillage, to pay large sums for their maintenance.

These lawless depredators were distinguished by the names of Cotteraux, Brabançons, Routiers, &c. Philip commanded his soldiers to assist the burghers of the towns against them; and he himself engaged and defeated them in one great action, in which 9,000 freebooters were slain. By these means, the mercenaries were considerably intimidated, and the people obtained respite from their exactions; though, under less prudent and prosperous sovereigns, France long continued to be harassed by them at intervals.

With the same care for the public tranquillity, Philip obliged the citizens of several towns to surround them with walls and fortifications sufficient to repel the attacks of these roving brigands. He paved the principal streets of Paris, which hitherto had been mere lanes, undrained and filthy; constructed markets, began the palace of the Louvre, and finally surrounded the city with a fortified wall having thirteen gates of entrance.

By his marriage with the daughter of the earl of Flanders, Philip obtained the city of Amiens, and an extension of the royal territory to the river Somme, which added much to the security of his frontier on that side. But the policy of this king, though often highly prudent, and successful in securing the aggrandizement of his power and kingdom, had in it nothing magnanimous; and it soon became his odious practice, as it had been his father's, to foment and abet unnatural wars and treasons amongst his neighbours, that he might turn their dissensions to his own advantage.

With this view he stirred up fresh strifes between the sons of Henry II. and their father, until that unhappy king sank broken-hearted into the grave, to be succeeded by his son Richard, Cœur de Lion, whose former alliance with Philip was soon changed into bitter animosity when

they met as independent sovereigns, fighting side by side in the East. Once more, all Europe had been roused by the calamitous tidings which came from Palestine. Saladin, the sultan of Egypt, and one of the bravest and most sagacious of Mussulman princes, had entered Palestine at the head of 80,000 men, utterly defeated the Christian army at Tiberias, and taken the city of Jerusalem (1187). At this news, Frederic Barbarossa, emperor of Germany, Philip, and Richard of England, each gathered a large army, and passed over to the Holy Land. Frederic, bathing on a hot day in a cold mountain-stream (like Alexander in the Cydnus, in the same vicinity), caught a disorder of which he died; an irreparable loss to the Crusade. Philip and Richard quarrelled at the siege of Acre: Philip being jealous of the prodigious feats of the English king, and the renown which they acquired to him; and Richard exasperated by the offensive tone of superiority which Philip affected towards him, as suzerain lord of the dominions which the English monarch owned in France.

The discord of the two kings, and the reluctance of Philip to prosecute an enterprise from which he could derive no personal advantage, rendered the success of the crusade hopeless. Richard remained in Palestine, winning splendid but barren victories. Philip returned home at the end of a few months; but to silence the reproaches of those who upbraided him with deserting the cause of Christendom, he left a body of his troops to co-operate in the task of recovering Jerusalem. Richard too truly suspected that Philip's chief motive for returning was the hope of making a successful attack on Normandy and the other Plantagenet possessions in France, while he was too far away to defend them. To avert this suspicion, the king of France pledged himself by a solemn oath neither to attack any of Richard's dominions, nor dispossess any of his vassals, while he was absent in the Crusade. Yet Philip no sooner reached Rome, on his return homewards, than he made all possible interest with the Pope to be

absolved from this oath. The Pope refused to grant so dishonourable a request, and the king of France sought other means of attaining his end. His first wife had died during his absence. He married in her stead Ingeborg, sister of Canute V., king of Denmark ; designing to obtain with his Danish spouse a transference of all the rights competent to her family, which was descended from the famous Canute the Great, king of England and Scandinavia ; and to have thereby a pretext for invading England, as if the throne of that kingdom had been unlawfully possessed by the house of Plantagenet.

Canute, however, did not choose to transfer his claims for the dishonourable purpose of affording Philip a pretext for injuring his late companion in arms, while engaged in the religious warfare to which they had both been sworn ; and Philip, whose suit for the princess had been dictated by policy rather than affection, banished the unfortunate Ingeborg to a convent, before she had resided two days in his palace. He then employed some subservient bishops who were about his court, to discover cause for a divorce, which was found, as usual, on the pretext of too close a relationship between the divorced parties ; and a pedigree being drawn out (or invented) to favour the plea, a complaisant council of French prelates passed the desired sentence of separation.

Philip then married Agnes de Meran, daughter of the duke of Dalmatia. But the king of Denmark remonstrated at Rome against the injury inflicted on his unoffending sister ; and Innocent III., who had by this time succeeded to the Papal throne, being satisfied that there was no just ground of separation, annulled the divorce, and ordered Philip to take back his Danish wife. He refused, and Innocent immediately laid the whole kingdom under an interdict. Philip revenged himself on the Pope, by persecuting his own clergy, seizing on their goods, and maintaining large bodies of the mercenary soldiers whom heretofore he had endeavoured to extirpate, in order to overawe resistance.

But the terror and suffering which the interdict occasioned to the population generally, rendered it impossible for the king to prolong such a state of things. He abruptly informed the Papal legate that he would comply with the injunction of the Church, and did so with very little ceremony; riding up to the convent where Ingeborg resided, taking her behind him on the same horse, and proceeding with her in that manner to Paris, where he publicly acknowledged her to be his lawful wife. Ingeborg, with the same patient obedience which had distinguished her in the cloister, returned to the world, and lived and died blameless, if not beloved. The fate of Agnes de Meran was more melancholy; she died broken-hearted, at finding herself reduced from the rank of the king's wife to that of his concubine.

While these strange matrimonial arrangements were pending, several years had elapsed, during which Philip had been pursuing his career of aggrandizement with little hesitation as to whether the means he employed were fair or foul, so long as they promised him success. Richard having remained in Palestine till almost all his army had melted away by sickness and incessant fighting, was recalled to Europe by the news that his brother John and Philip were in close alliance; John having agreed that Philip should work his pleasure on Richard's dominions in France, provided he might usurp his brother's throne in England. On the voyage home, Richard was shipwrecked, and fell into the power, first of the duke of Austria, and then of the emperor of Germany, who basely threw the hero of the Crusade into prison, that he might extort an enormous sum of money for his ransom. Delighted at the misfortune which had befallen his dreaded rival, Philip offered great gifts to the emperor if he would surrender Richard to his custody, or even keep him in prolonged captivity. Meantime, observing the *forms* of public faith with technical precision, while shamelessly violating the substance, the French king despatched a herald to denounce war against

Richard, then lying a defenceless captive in a German fortress ; and after this insulting affectation of defiance, assaulted, on various pretexts, the frontiers of Normandy ; seizing town after town, which he either bestowed on his ally John, or retained for himself at his pleasure.

But England had raised her king's ransom, and the German princes had compelled the emperor, despite Philip's bribes and offers, to set his prisoner free. In March, 1194, Richard reached England, and speedily dispersed the adherents of his traitorous brother. From thence he passed over into Normandy, pardoned John, but marched against Philip, and defeated him at Fretteval, in the Orléanais, capturing the records of his kingdom.\* The French were forced to retire from Normandy, Touraine, and Maine, which they had invaded.

But Richard was too much weakened by the impoverishment of his kingdom and the rebellion of the vassals stirred up to insurrection against him in France, to pursue his advantages so promptly as he desired. Truces therefore followed each other, but only to be broken almost as soon as they were formed. In September 1198, Philip was defeated at Gisors, and narrowly escaped with his life. Then the Pope's legate negotiated a more durable peace ; but before it could be concluded, Richard perished, besieging the castle of a rebellious vassal in the Limousin.

There were two competitors for his inheritance ; John and his young nephew Arthur, duke of Brittany. Anjou, Touraine, Maine, and Poitou, declared for Arthur ; Normandy, Guienne, and England chose John. Philip now employed Arthur entirely as his tool ; he knighted him, though only fourteen years of age ; gave him his daughter Mary, a child of five years, in marriage, and sent him

\* From this time the French kings ceased to carry about with them all grants, charters, &c. Officers were appointed to recover the lost documents, or copies of them, if possible ; and when this had been done, they were deposited in the abbey of St. Denis, as the first public Record Office.



with a military retinue to besiege Mirabel, a fortified place near Poitiers, held by Eleanor, the aged queen-dowager of England. She held out till her son John arrived, and utterly discomfited the besiegers, taking Arthur and every knight in his little army prisoners. Arthur was carried to Normandy, and in the following year (1203) murdered, it was believed, by John himself. The circumstances of the poor boy's disappearance were never exactly known; but whether John were murderer in intention only, or in the actual deed, the crime cost him one-third of his dominions at a blow, and in the same degree enlarged those of the king of France.

Philip, as his suzerain, summoned John in his character of duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, to answer before his peers, to a charge of having murdered, within the jurisdiction of the realm of France, Arthur, duke of Brittany, an *arrière vassal* of the French crown. John, either from the consciousness of guilt, or the suspicion that the peers by whom he was to be judged were too much under the influence of Philip to afford him an impartial trial, declined to appear; whereupon the judges declared him worthy of death as a felon, and contumacious; and pronounced all his lands in France forfeit to the king. Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, Philip possessed himself of; of Guienne or Aquitaine, he was only able to seize Poitou; the men of the south remaining loyal to the descendants of their native sovereigns. Several years of sanguinary warfare were necessary indeed, before the king of France could secure his hold of the other provinces; but John now, as always, his own worst enemy, so revolted his subjects by his cruelty and his covetousness, that at length all turned against him.

He had carried away Eleanor, the sister and heiress of the unfortunate Arthur, to England, and kept her there all her life in confinement, to secure Brittany for himself; but this availed him nothing; the right of Eleanor passed to a half-sister, the child of her mother's last marriage, and King Philip bestowing this lady in marriage

on one of his own kinsmen, united the duchy of Brittany more closely to the royal possessions, by making it a fief immediately dependent on the crown of France.

At one period, he even prepared to invade England, hoping that he might be able to attach that kingdom also to his own. John had been long at feud with the Pope, Innocent III.; and the latter, having tried to bring him to submission by repeated excommunications, and by laying England under an interdict, without any effect, proceeded to absolve his subjects from their allegiance, and to offer the kingdom (as if it had belonged to him) to Philip. Philip accordingly commanded a great army to assemble at Rouen, in April, 1213. From thence they were to march to Boulogne, where 1,700 small vessels were ready to carry them over. But the English, who had in the preceding year burned Barfleur, Dieppe, and other places on the coast, now burned the French fleet. John, nevertheless, aware that the minds of his subjects were alienated from him, sought protection against Philip's attacks by the shameful method of surrendering his kingdom to the Pope, as lord paramount, in order to receive it back again as a fief of the see of Rome; and the papal nuncio immediately announced to the French king that he must not presume to molest a kingdom which had become part of the patrimony of St. Peter.

Philip desisted, in consequence, from any attempt at invasion. John formed alliances on the continent with Otho IV., emperor of Germany, and with several of Philip's great vassals, the earls of Flanders, Boulogne, Auvergne, and Toulouse, who were alarmed at the increasing power of the Crown. The confederates, however, were utterly routed at Bouvines (between Lille and Tournay), by the king of France, who took the earl of Flanders and many other noblemen prisoners, after an obstinately contested fight, which lasted from noon till five in the evening, July 27th, 1214. The *communes* of fifteen French towns sent their trained bands to this battle; and it was remarked that these plebeian soldiers

acquitted themselves as bravely as the knights. No victory obtained by a French king had ever yet excited so much national joy and pride as this of Bouvines. Philip's return to his capital was a continued triumph. On his approach to Paris, the whole city went forth to meet him, and kept up a continuous festival for several days. Amongst the ecclesiastics in Philip's army was the bishop of Beauvais, a martial prelate, who conceived that he sufficiently fulfilled the canon which prohibited priests from shedding blood, by striking down his antagonists with an iron mace instead of a sword, and by that means did great execution.

Less than two years after the battle of Bouvines, the barons of England, utterly wearied of their faithless and wicked king, resorted to the very questionable expedient of offering the crown to Louis, eldest son of King Philip, and who was also John's nephew by marriage, having espoused Blanche of Castile, the daughter of his sister Eleanor. The Pope, having taken John under his protection, forbade Louis to accept the offer of the barons; but the prince made no account of the prohibition. He landed in England, and for a short time found himself master of a very small part of the country. But John died at this juncture (Oct., 1216); the barons transferred their allegiance to his young son and rightful successor; and Louis, after some ineffectual attempts to maintain his position by force of arms, was obliged to withdraw to his own country, September, 1217.

Philip had taken no direct part in his son's expedition to England; he had even affected to discourage him from undertaking it. Nor did he actively participate in the frightful war against the people of the south, which, under the name of a crusade against the Albigenses, lasted through a considerable portion of his reign, and the whole of that of his successor. A brief account of this war will be found in the next chapter. The concluding years of Philip's reign were more happily employed, in measures tending to promote the internal order and

prosperity of his dominions. Amongst other objects, the extension and security of the University of Paris received a large portion of his care, insomuch that he is commonly regarded as its founder. In its origin, it was merely an assemblage of students of theology and philosophy, most of them in orders ; but it afterwards became a body including scholars of various ages, countries, and conditions, pursuing every branch of study, and divided, according to the places whence they came, into the sections of France, of England, of Normandy, and of Picardy. A multitude of colleges gradually arose at Paris, some of which acquired great celebrity. Philip Augustus concurred with the Pope in exempting the scholars from civil jurisdiction ; and although this privilege, which placed the colleges under the protection and exclusive authority of the Church, occasioned sometimes great disorders, the University of Paris became one of the most powerful and influential bodies of the State, and acquired also great celebrity throughout Europe.

Philip died at Mantes, in 1223, after a reign of forty-three years, during which he had augmented the territories of the French crown not only by the confiscated possessions of John of England, but also by the earldoms of Auvergne and Boulogne, taken from rebellious vassals. The county of Valois, and some other smaller fiefs, had accrued to the Crown, by the extinction of the families who possessed them.

Besides this great increase of territory, King Philip had possessed himself of very great treasure in money, a portion of which he bequeathed to the hospitals in his domains : the fact that amongst these were *two thousand* houses for lepers testifies to the fearful prevalence of that disease, brought, it was supposed, by pilgrims and Crusaders from the East ; and perpetuated by the misery to which numbers of the population were reduced, by the continual wars and broils, which brought in their train wasting, dearth, and pestilence.

Louis VIII. succeeded his father on the throne. The

part taken by this king in the war against the Albigenses is the only circumstance of his reign which requires notice, and it will be found in the next chapter. He died in 1226, after a reign of three years.

## CHAPTER XXII.

People of the South.—Their Condition, Character, &c.—The War (or *Crusade*) against the Albigenses : and its Results.

FROM 1207 TO 1229 A.D.

BEFORE entering on the history of the war against the Albigenses,\* it is necessary to remember that the inhabitants of the south of France, at this time, were governed by counts and lords who were vassals of the king of Aragon, not of the crown of France.

The city and territory of Barcelona, together with much adjacent country wrested from the Mahometan conquerors of Spain, had formed a portion of the Frank empire under Charlemagne. Charlemagne gave it to one of his nobles, to govern it as an hereditary fief, with the title of Count of Barcelona. Much of the country on the north side of the Pyrenees likewise formed part of the government of the counts of Barcelona ; as Béarn, Roussillon, Foix, Montpellier, &c. In 1131, Count

\* So named, apparently, from the city or diocese of *Alby*, where they were very numerous. But the name was applied without discrimination to bodies of men holding very different opinions on some important points. The Vaudois, dwelling from time immemorial in the valleys of the Alps, and who had gradually multiplied and spread westward into France : the disciples of Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, who had been roused by the superstition he saw prevailing around him, to abandon his business, distribute his wealth among the poor, and travel in France and Lombardy, carrying with him many portions of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, which he expounded with great effect to numerous hearers. The people known under the various names of *Cathari*, *Paterini*, *Paulicians*, &c. ; of some of whom it is said that they were tainted with Manichæan errors brought from the East ; all these were confounded together under the name Albigenses.



Raymond V. married the heiress of the kingdom of Aragon, and thenceforward all these fine countries became fiefs of Aragon, as did likewise Provence, which was under the rule of hereditary counts, descended from the counts of Barcelona. The earldom of Toulouse was a fief of the French crown, but so powerful and wealthy, and so far removed from the seat of the supreme government, that it might almost be regarded as an independent principality. The earls by whom it was governed were of the same family with the counts of Provence and the reigning house of Aragon, and very closely united in friendship and alliance with them.

And since the south-west of France belonged to the house of Plantagenet, it may be said that the whole of the land south of the Loire was estranged from the crown of France.

We have seen already that the people of Aquitaine (comprehending under that name all who spoke the soft Provençal language, or *langue d'oc*) entertained no very friendly feeling for those of northern France.\* Tracing their descent to the ancient Roman colonists, and to the Gothic invaders of southern Gaul, the men of the south regarded with mingled contempt, fear, and ill-will, the inhabitants of the northern provinces, who had made far less progress than themselves in civil liberty, as well as in the arts and refinements of social life; for the traditions of their ancient Roman privileges of self-government had never entirely died away among them. Though often overrun by the Franks under the two first dynasties, they had never been effectually subjugated; and Toulouse, Marseilles, Arles, Béziers, and many other of their greater towns, emulous of the Italian republics with whom they traded and formed alliances, were themselves living under a government which was virtually republican.

Each of these free cities being, however, the capital of

\* The remainder of this chapter is chiefly taken from Sir James Stephen's "Lectures on the History of France."

one of the greater lords among whom the whole of Aquitaine was parcelled out, became the seat of a princely and luxurious court. A genial climate, a fertile soil, and an active commerce, rendered the means of subsistence abundant, even to the poor, and gave to the rich ample resources for indulging in all the gratifications which wealth could purchase. And the enjoyments thus brought within their reach were not only eagerly seized, but recklessly abused. They lived too commonly as if life had been one long holiday, in a land of feasting and gallantry and mirth. They played with the stern features of war in knightly tournaments. They parodied the severe toils of justice in their courts of love. They transferred the poet's high vocation to the Troubadours, whose amatory and artificial effusions indicated a state of society such as never can exist among men except as the herald of great calamities. The imputations of irreligion, heresy, and shameless debauchery, which were cast with so much bitterness on the Albigeois, or Albigenses, by their persecutors, were probably not ill-founded, if the word "*Albigenses*" be employed as synonymous with *Provençaux* or *Languedocians*. For they were apparently a race, among whom the hallowed charities of domestic life, and the reverence due to divine ordinances and divine truth, were not seldom extinguished by infidel jests, and by heart-hardening impurities. But if by the word *Albigenses* be meant the Vaudois, or those associates (or followers) of Peter Waldo who revived the doctrines against which the Church of Rome directed her censures, then the accusation of dissoluteness may be safely rejected as altogether calumnious; and the charge of heresy may be considered, if not as entirely unfounded, yet as a cruel exaggeration. The singular independence and freedom which the people of those countries enjoyed in a social and political point of view (and of which we may judge from the fact that any citizen's son might become a knight, and be admitted to joust at tournaments with the noblest; and also that the land belonged to the body of the people,

and none contested with them its free possession), had been very favourable to independence of thought. And in the case of some, perhaps of many, this freedom had degenerated into unrestrained licence, giving birth to rash and dangerous theories and speculations, some of which went far to destroy the whole system of revealed truth. But we may infer, even from the statements of historians most hostile to the Albigenses, that free-thinkers such as these were the few exceptions among them, and that, in general, they anticipated and held the same doctrines which were, after the lapse of three centuries, to be promulgated by the Reformers of Germany and England.

The clergy, it is also said, in these southern provinces had not distinguished themselves, as they had done in some eminent instances in the north, by learning and by purity of life. On the contrary, they had fallen into corruptions and disorders which brought their office into contempt. Early in the twelfth century, preachers had traversed the south of France from east to west, disseminating opinions in which the rejection of superstitions founded only on tradition seems to have been mingled with the rejection of almost all sacred ordinances and forms of divine worship. They inveighed, likewise, against the vices of the priesthood; and gained so many proselytes, that St. Bernard undertook more than one journey to suppress the rising sect. "For," said he, "the churches are without people; the people without priests; the priests without honour; and Christians without Christ. The churches are no longer esteemed holy, nor the sacraments sacred, nor are the festivals any more celebrated," &c.

Later in the same century, the Pope, Alexander III., published repeated edicts against the Languedocian heretics, under various names; ordering no man to afford them a refuge on his estates, or communicate with them in buying or selling; pursuing them with anathemas, refusal of Christian sepulture, and other spiritual

chastisements. "But it was in vain that pontifical couriers brought to Alby, Toulouse, and Narbonne, bulls of excommunication and anathema against the enemies of the Roman faith. Heterodoxy had gained upon even the ministers of the churches whence these bulls were to be fulminated; and the bishops themselves, though more firm in the Catholic discipline, being powerless, did not know how to decide, and at length underwent the influence of the universal example. It seemed clear that this great schism, in which all classes and ranks of society participated, could only be extinguished by a blow struck on the population in a mass; by a war of invasion which should destroy the social order whence had emanated its independence of spirit." And this was what Pope Innocent III. undertook in the first years of the thirteenth century.

Innocent watched with anxious forebodings the progress of intellectual freedom among mankind; and while menacing and contending with all the sovereigns of Europe by turns, and pursuing the political aggrandizement of the Papacy with equal state-craft and daring, he was still observing and punishing every dissent from the tenets of the Church of Rome, with boundless reliance on his own infallibility, and utter recklessness of human suffering.

In the year 1207, he had sent Castelnau, his legate, into Languedoc. Twice had Castelnau required Raymond VI., count of Toulouse, to exterminate his heretical subjects with sword and fire; and twice, when dissatisfied with his zeal in that atrocious office, he had excommunicated him, and laid his dominions under an interdict. The wrong was aggravated by such insults as could not fail to rouse lively indignation in a high-spirited prince; and Raymond, yielding at last to the impulse of anger, exclaimed, in an unhappy moment, that he would make Castelnau answer for his insolence with his life. One of his attendants overheard the threat, followed the legate to a little inn on the right bank of the Rhone, and there

entering into a new and angry debate with him, ended by plunging a poniard into his heart.

And now Innocent issued bull after bull, absolving the subjects of Raymond from their allegiance, permitting every Catholic to assail his person, exhorting all men to assist in his destruction, and in the extermination of his heretical subjects, and promising to those who should take the cross against the Provençaux, the remission of their sins and a share in the property of the heretics.

Unfortunately, the times were favourable to this crusade of Christians against Christians. The wars and conquests of Philip Augustus in Normandy, Anjou, &c., consequent on the confiscation of King John's territories, had caused the ruin or banishment of many men, and thus augmented the number of landless knights and of reckless fortune-hunters. The *pilgrimage against the Albigensis* (for so the war was designated) promised less risk, and a more certain profit, than the crusade against the Mahometans; and accordingly the army of the new pilgrims soon numbered fifty thousand men of every rank and nation, but especially French and Flemings, under the leadership of the duke of Burgundy, the counts of Nevers, Auxerre, and others; but especially (as renowned above the rest for skill in arms) of Simon de Montfort, the lord of a petty fief near Paris, and earl of Leicester, in England, in right of his mother, an Anglo-Norman lady. Amongst the ecclesiastical chiefs by whom the operations of the crusade were guided were Dominic, a Spanish monk of austere life, much learning, and burning zeal for the extinction of heresy; Amalric, the Pope's legate; and Foulques (or Fouquet), a monk who was ultimately made bishop of Toulouse. This man, who in his youth had earned a shameful notoriety by his profligate career, and had not blushed to celebrate his infamy in verse, passed the evening of his life in conducting the massacre of the people doomed to receive him as their chief pastor.

As the armament advanced along the valley of the



Rhone, the heart of Raymond quailed at the gathering tempest. To avert the calamities impending over his land, he humbled himself before Innocent, and his penitence seemed to be accepted. But the conditions of his pardon were, that he should surrender seven of his best castles as a pledge of his fidelity ; that he should submit himself to the future judgment of the papal legate on the charge of heresy ; that he should do public penance for his past offences ; and that he should then, in his own person, become a crusader against his own subjects. Every part of this humiliating compact was fulfilled. The earl appeared in the cathedral of St. Gilles, with naked shoulders, bearing round his neck a cord, each end of which was carried by a bishop, by whose hands he was beaten with rods before the altar, until covered with blood and in an agony of shame and distress he was permitted at length to escape from his tormentors, and from the presence of the vast crowd assembled to behold the degradation of their prince and suzerain.

Nor was Innocent propitiated even by this abasement of his enemy. "We counsel you with the Apostle Paul" (he writes to his agents in Provence) "to employ guile with regard to this earl, for in this case it ought to be called prudence. We must attack separately those who are separated from unity. Leave for a time this earl of Toulouse, employing towards him a wise dissimulation, that the other heretics may be the more easily defeated, and that afterwards we may crush him when he shall be left alone."

In obedience to this atrocious policy, Raymond was for the moment left alone, while the tide of war, diverted from himself, was directed towards his young and gallant kinsman, Roger, viscount of Béziers. One after another the castles of Roger were abandoned, burned, or captured ; and at the bidding of the legate Amalric, all suspected heretics found there were cast headlong into the flames. The chief strength of Roger consisted in his two great cities of Béziers and Carcassone. Béziers fell by assault.



A prodigious number of the country people had taken refuge within the walls of the city ; and many thousands had sought sanctuary in the two great churches. The military leaders consulted Amalric concerning the fate of these unfortunates, of whom part only were heretics. "Slay them all," was the execrable answer ; "God will know which are His." It was obeyed to the letter. The churches and the dwellings were filled with dead bodies, until the slaughter ceased from mere want of victims. Not one inhabitant of Béziers remained alive. When the booty had been withdrawn, the crusaders set fire to the city, and the blackened ruins long remained a dismal monument to the memory of its murdered population.

From Béziers the crusaders marched to Carcassone, where Roger commanded in person, and sustained the siege with undaunted bravery. But since he could not easily be overcome by force of arms, treachery was employed. A safe-conduct from the legate and the lords of the besieging army, confirmed by their oaths, was given to Roger, that he might visit their camp, and enter into a conference with them, with a view to negotiate peace. But no sooner had Roger entered the camp, accompanied by his principal knights, than the legate, following that atrocious maxim of Roman policy, "No faith to be kept with heretics," caused him and his companions to be arrested. Roger was given into the charge of Simon de Montfort, and presently put to death by poison. The citizens of Carcassone, perceiving that their lord was betrayed, evacuated the town by subterranean passages unknown to the besiegers ; some hundreds of them, however, being seized and slaughtered before they could make good their escape. The whole heritage of the viscount of Béziers was now at the mercy of the conquerors ; and the legate conferred it on De Montfort, to hold on condition of paying an annual tribute to the Pope, as liege lord of the conquered territories.

Most of the other leaders and their followers, satiated

with blood and rapine, now withdrew from the crusade. But the cupidity of De Montfort and the fanaticism of the legate were excited rather than satisfied. The fairest portion of Languedoc still remained in possession of Raymond of Toulouse; and the monks of Citeaux, who had specially undertaken the duty of preaching the crusade against the Albigenes, travelled up and down Europe, seeking new recruits for a war against that unhappy prince. The earl, unaware of the treachery which Innocent meditated against him, and conceiving the Pontiff himself to be less ferocious than his legate, once more appealed to him in person. Innocent affected to receive him with favour, and absolved him provisionally from the charges brought against him of heresy, and participation in the murder of Castelnau; but at the same time referred him to a council which was about to be holden in Provence, by which those charges should be finally heard and decided upon. To this council Innocent now despatched a Genoese monk, named Theoderic, of whom the panegyrist of the crusade says, "He was a circumspect man, prudent, and very zealous for the affairs of God; and he desired above all things to find some pretext of right to refuse the earl that opportunity of justifying himself which the Pope had granted him." Such a pretext was easily found, and Raymond was informed by his judges that his defence could not be received. He was then again excommunicated, and his dominions offered as a reward to the champions who should execute the Church's sentence against him. To earn that reward, Montfort and Amalric, at the head of a new host of crusaders, marched through the devoted land, and again woes indescribable accompanied their footsteps. Cruelty, avarice, every foul passion, was let loose upon the defenceless people. Heretics, or those suspected of heresy, were compelled by Amalric to ascend vast piles of burning faggots, persons of every age, sex, and condition being confounded together in these horrible holocausts. At length the crusaders reached Toulouse. Fouquet had

organized there a band, called the White Company, for the destruction of their heretical fellow-citizens. To these had been opposed another band, called the Black Company, composed of the adherents of Earl Raymond.

And now Raymond, taking courage from despair, succeeded in throwing himself into the city, united both the companies in his service, and repulsed De Montfort. But it was only a temporary respite—the prelude to a fearful destruction. From beyond the Pyrenees, Pedro of Aragon, with a thousand knights, marched to the rescue of Raymond, his kinsman, and of the counts de Foix, Comminges, and Béarn, his vassals; and their united forces came into communication with each other at Muret, a little town three leagues distant from Toulouse. There also, on the 12th September, 1213, appeared De Montfort, at the head of his crusaders, and with seven bishops attending him. The battle was furious and short. A Spanish knight, who that day wore the king's armour, was bending beneath the blows of his assailants. "This cannot be Don Pedro of Aragon!" cried one of them. The king heard it, and rushed to the rescue of his officer, exclaiming, "Don Pedro is here!" They closed round him, and Don Pedro was slain. His army, deprived of their chief, dispersed in disorder, and the whole infantry of Raymond and his allies was put to the sword, or swept away by the current of the Garonne.

Toulouse surrendered; and a council of thirty-three prelates, assembled at Montpellier, unanimously acknowledged De Montfort as prince of the whole of Raymond's dominions, and of the other counties conquered by his host. But ere long the conquerors quarrelled among themselves, Amalric and De Montfort each claiming the dukedom of Narbonne; upon which the crusader invaded the legate, and the legate excommunicated the crusader. Innocent himself had become jealous of the formidable power he had so largely helped to create; and in 1215 he proposed at the fourth Lateran council finally to dispose of the territories conquered in

the crusade against the Albigenses, and to bring that war to an end. At this council appeared the dispossessed Earl Raymond, attended by his son, afterwards known as Raymond VII. Prostrating themselves before the assembled fathers of the Church, the princes recounted the wrongs inflicted upon them by De Montfort, and the enormous cruelties of Fouquet, whom they denounced as the destroyer of more than ten thousand of the flock intrusted to his pastoral care. Some touch of pity or remorse seems to have visited the members of the council, for they reserved for Raymond VII. the countship of Venaissin, and some portion of Provence, and replaced the counts de Foix and Comminges in possession of their estates. But all the rest of those fine countries were confirmed to De Montfort; and for a short time the throne to which he had waded through a sea of blood seemed to be established securely.

The excessive cruelty and the perfidies of their bishop, however, kept alive the spirit of hatred and resistance to the new rule at Toulouse; and when some recruits from Spain, commanded by the two Raymonds, appeared beneath their walls, the whole population was animated with joy and enthusiastic loyalty. A sudden insurrection overwhelmed the soldiers and partisans of De Montfort, and once more the standard of its ancient lords waved above the ramparts and the palace of Toulouse. The knights and commons of Languedoc eagerly rallied round it, and De Montfort coming to attack the city, was slain in repulsing a sally of the besieged. The siege was raised, and Raymond remained in possession of his capital, to the delight of the people. But their troubles were very far from being at an end. Innocent III. was dead; but his successor, Pope Honorius III., applied to Prince Louis, son of Philip Augustus, to undertake a fresh war against the people of Languedoc; assigning to him for that purpose half the funds which had been raised for a crusade in the East. Louis, accordingly, together with the son of De Montfort, invaded the country once more, and invested

Toulouse, but not with success. The younger Raymond defended the city gallantly, and the prince returned to the north of France. The elder Raymond died. Philip Augustus also died, and left his crown to Louis, who in vain contributed men and money for the subjugation of Raymond VII. But in the beginning of 1224, the younger De Montfort, despairing of success, bartered all his hereditary claim to his father's conquest in Languedoc for the office of Constable of France, which Louis VIII. granted him as an equivalent; and in the following year, a council convened by the Pope, at Bourges, enjoined Louis to purge the land of heretics; and assigned to him for that purpose one-tenth of the whole ecclesiastical revenues of France for five years. The king accordingly took the cross, and, attended by a large number of his barons and their followers, advanced again to devastate Languedoc, and exterminate all the heretics he could find there.

This was the first time that the banner of a *king of France* had been unfurled in these crusades, and when the people of the south saw that the whole power of the kingdom was now to be arrayed against them, their hearts sank. They had been so worn out by repeated invasions; so desolated, bereaved, and torn with all the horrors of war and persecution in their most appalling forms, that with one accord, barons, knights, and commons, hastened to make any concessions which might avert a renewal of those calamities. At this juncture, Louis VIII. died, November, 1226, of an epidemic fever which had swept away 30,000 of his soldiers. But by the orders of the Regent, his widow Queen Blanche, the siege of Toulouse was resumed, and the evil genius of the place, Bishop Fouquet, suggested to the royal army the only means of a successful attack upon his unhappy flock. By his advice, the whole of the adjacent country was utterly wasted and laid bare, till Toulouse stood in the centre of a desert, from which no supplies of any kind could be procured. The spirit of Raymond himself gave way when this new



vial of wrath was poured out on his devoted country ; and in April, 1229, he signed a treaty, by which he abdicated all his sovereignty to the king of France ; a small territory only being reserved for his daughter, the heiress and last representative of his race. The unfortunate father was conducted to the church of Notre Dame at Paris, there to undergo from priestly hands the same public and ignominious chastisement which had been inflicted on his father in the cathedral of Toulouse.

Yet another woe. In about six months from the cession of Languedoc, a council held at Toulouse\* established the Inquisition, for the conservation of the true faith, and the punishment of heresy among the people of that country.

Gradually, but most unwillingly, bowing the neck beneath the terrors of this new tribunal, and the burden of a foreign yoke, the men of Languedoc at length submitted to their fate ; and the kings of France saw their domain extended over all the fertile regions which connect the eastern slopes of the Pyrenees with the western declivities of the Alps.

In the course of this war of twenty years' duration, more than three-fourths of the landed proprietors had been despoiled of their possessions. In hundreds of villages every inhabitant had been massacred ; and there was scarcely a family in the country of which some member had not fallen beneath the sword of De Mont-

\* By the decrees of this council, "laymen, even of the highest rank, were obliged to close their houses, cellars, forests, against heretical fugitives, and to take all means to detect and bring them to trial ; heretics voluntarily converted were compelled to wear certain distinctive marks on their garments ; those who returned to the Church under the influence of fear were still to suffer imprisonment at the discretion of the bishop ; all children of the age of twelve or fourteen were compelled by oath not only to abjure every heresy, but to expose and denounce any which they should detect in others ; and this code of bigotry was properly completed by a strict prohibition to all laymen to possess any copies of the Scriptures."—*Waddington's "History of the Church,"* p. 359.



fort's soldiers, or been outraged by their brutality. The heretics, real or supposed, had been swept from the land. Henceforward all dissenters from Rome were consigned to the hands of the inquisitors. Languedoc never recovered her municipal liberty, her social and intellectual independence, or the high degree of wealth and comparative civilization she had formerly enjoyed. She even lost her language, and the elegant *langue d'oc* ceased to exist, except in the incorrect local dialects which still form the *patois* of the southern peasant.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Louis IX.—League of Nobles against the Crown.—Wise Regency of the Queen Mother.—Early Training and Character of Louis IX.—His Opposition to the aggressive pretensions of the Papal Court.—War and Peace with Henry III.—Mongol Invasion of Europe.—Disasters in Palestine.—Louis takes the Cross: His first Crusade: Captivity in Egypt.—Release; and Abode at Acre.—Crusade of the *Pastoureaux*.—Death of the Queen Regent.—Return of the King.

FROM 1226 A.D. TO 1254.

LOUIS IX. was but eleven years old when the death of his father placed him in possession of a throne threatened with much disturbance by the ambition of the great vassals of the Crown. Dissatisfied at the marked though gradual increase of the royal power, they regarded the minority of the young king as a golden opportunity for recovering the privileges and the authority which had been wrested from them by Philip Augustus, and rendering themselves as independent of the Crown as they had been before the accession of that politic sovereign. *Philip Hurepel*, the son of Agnes de Méran, claimed the regency of the kingdom as of right belonging to him. Thibault, earl of Champagne; Peter Mauclerc, duke of Brittany; Hugh, count de la Marche, and many others of less note, were all in league to enlarge their own prerogatives at the expense of the Crown. With them were also the lords of Foix and Comminges; and even Henry III. of England, whom the confederates had attracted to their alliance by promising him aid for the recovery of Normandy.

But the sagacity and promptitude of the queen mother disconcerted all their plans. By the will of the late king, Blanche had been appointed guardian of her son during

his minority. No regent was named; but the queen, supported by the authority of the Pope's legate, and that of the bishops who were in her husband's camp at the time of his death, assumed the government, and within a few weeks of the decease of Louis VIII., carried her son to Rheims to be solemnly anointed and crowned king.

Employing severity towards some of the malcontents, and gaining the good will of others by timely gifts and favours, she gradually dissolved the league formed against the Crown. King Henry, weak and pusillanimous in youth as in age, landed in France, spent an enormous sum of money in useless parade and feasting, and then returned to England, almost without having broken a lance in the cause for which he had left his own kingdom. The most dangerous designs of the duke of Brittany and his friends were rendered abortive by the defection of the earl of Champagne, whose attachment to the queen mother overcame the factious spirit which had induced him to join the malcontents. But although Earl Thibault's services were very useful on more than one occasion, his friendship was as inconvenient as his enmity would have been dangerous, his unpopularity with his brother nobles occasioning constant feuds. It was fortunate for the peace of the court and government that his marriage with the king of Navarre's daughter called him to the throne of that little kingdom on the death of his father-in-law. Meanwhile Philip Hurepel died; and Mauleverer, after repeatedly submitting to the Crown, and presently breaking his oaths of allegiance, was at length reduced to great straits, and presented himself at court with a halter round his neck, in token of his entire subjection, soliciting mercy in the most humiliating terms.

Amidst all the cares of government, Queen Blanche never forgot that her first duty was to train up a wise and righteous ruler for France.

"My son," she sometimes said to Louis, "you know

how dear you are to me, yet I would rather see you dead than guilty of deadly sin." The young king's range of study was extensive; but of all his teachers, no one had so much influence in the formation of his character as an Italian gentleman, named Pacifico, whom a sermon of St. Francis of Assisi had won to a life of religious austerity. From him, as well as from the earlier lessons of his mother, Louis derived the deep sense of religious obligation which governed his conduct through life. Neither parent nor tutor, however, overlooked the necessity of preparing their pupil to rule over knights and warriors in a martial age. Louis was encouraged in all manly exercises, and delighted in them, especially in falconry, which was at that time a passion in France, with the clergy even, as well as with the laity. But the casual remark of a young companion, that "the hours of a king were precious, and should be turned to the best account," made so lasting an impression on the conscientious young sovereign, that he thenceforward greatly restricted himself in his favourite diversion; and the hunting excursions which had been the recreation of his boyish years were exchanged for tours of observation through Normandy and other provinces, with Pacifico for his companion.

An only sister, known in history as *Isabella the Nun*, had her share in stamping the character of Louis with the tenderness and purity which it never lost. She had refused an offer of marriage from the emperor of Germany, to enter the cloister; and although the rule of life she saw fit to impose on herself far exceeded in austerity the ordinary mortifications of conventual retirement, she mingled with it so much of wisdom and of cheerfulness, that Louis both looked up to her as a guide, and also accounted his visits to her quiet retreat some of his chiefest pleasures. To her example, probably, may be traced the rigorous severity of self-discipline which he adopted in his youth, and ceased not to maintain amidst the business and the pleasures of maturer years; mort-

fyng the flesh, not only in the spiritual, but in a literal sense, with much bodily suffering. A considerable portion of each day was allotted to devotion, public and private ; and the resolve, " Evening, and morning, and noon-day will I pray, and that instantly . . . At midnight I will rise to give thanks," . . . was carried out by this devout monarch to the letter. And his devotion recommended itself by its fruits ; for Louis learnt to be considerate and forbearing, in a degree which few men attain to. The chronicles of his private life contain numerous incidents and conversations illustrating the gentleness of "the good king" and his patient good humour under provocations, together with his shrewd sense, frankness of discourse and habitual endeavours to benefit those around him by insinuating lessons of wisdom and piety in attractive methods, rather than to enforce teaching and reproof. It was an age when much grossness and profane oaths defaced the daily communications of almost all men, even of the highest rank ; but it is the unanimous testimony of all who associated with Louis, that "profane or unseemly word never passed his lips," and that his favourite affirmation, *in truth it is so*, found more credit than all that other men protested with oaths.

In the year 1236, Louis attained his majority, and the informal regency of Queen Blanche was at an end ; but she remained to the end of her life her son's most trusted guide and counsellor, nor was he in any haste to take the management of his kingdom into his own hands. He was weighing the state of his country, and considering the condition of his subjects with a view to apply a remedy for some of the evils which afflicted France. Hereafter, we shall find him reforming abuses as far as his power extended. But the first years of his maturity were distinguished chiefly by works of beneficence. His alms-deeds, however, though exceedingly abundant, never encroached on that which belonged to the nation rather than to himself. The private domains of the Crown were

immense, and the revenue which they yielded more than sufficed for the expenses of a very sumptuous court. These, indeed, were in a measure curtailed by Louis ; for while he maintained the dignity and hospitality which became a king of France, he checked all needless waste and ostentation ; partly from the natural sobriety of his tastes, but more, from the conviction that soft luxurious living and worldly pomp were snares of which it behoved all Christian men to beware.

It is painful to turn from the contemplation of King Louis, earning, even in youth, the name of Father of his people, with ear and hand ever open for their relief, going himself privately under cover of the night to visit the abodes of want and soothe the sorrowing with his sympathy, to behold him in another character, in which he was by no means in advance of his contemporaries. The first royal ordinance belonging to this reign which has come down to modern times (dated April, 1228), records that the king was "desirous of consecrating the first-fruits of his reign to Almighty God, by whom he lived and ruled ; and therefore having taken counsel with the wise and great men of his kingdom, he decreed that heretics everywhere should be sought out and pursued with rigour." It is true that Louis was then but just thirteen, and entirely under the tutelage of his mother. But in this matter of warring against error with the sword, the king, when come to full age, was not wiser than his teachers. His judgment upon it is expressed in a conversation which his biographer Joinville thus reports : "The king told me that there was once a controversy at Cluny between the monks and some Jews. An old knight was present, who listened for some time, and then asked permission to speak. Singling out the most learned Jew, he asked him whether he really believed that the Virgin Mary was the mother of God, and bore the Saviour in her bosom. 'Not a word of it,' answered the Rabbi. 'Then thou art foolhardy,' said the knight, 'disbelieving all this, to come into the house of God ; for which truly thou shalt



now pay.' So, lifting up his crutch, he smote the Rabbi and felled him to the ground : whereupon the Jews fled away, and thus ended the disputation. The abbot remonstrated, and said the knight had done a foolish thing ; but the king, in relating the story, said it was well done ; and summed up the matter as follows :—No man, however learned a theologian he may be, ought to dispute with the Jews ; and a layman, whenever he hears the Christian faith condemned, should defend it, not only by words, but by a sharp two-edged sword, with which let him strike the unbelievers, and makers of scandal in the Church, till it enters their bodies up to the hilt."

King Louis detested the practice of usury, and to this we may attribute in part his severity against the Jews, who chiefly exercised the trade of money-lenders, and whom he banished from the kingdom : he also ordered one hundred and fifty Lombard bankers and merchants who had counting-houses in France to be imprisoned, because they had lent money, though at a very moderate rate of interest. But at that day the laws of the Church proscribed all such loans as criminal. Much heavier punishment was decreed by Louis against persons who should be guilty of blasphemy.

In regard of heresy, we have quoted above the edict issued in his name while he was yet too young to originate such a measure ; but it is melancholy to observe him, several years afterwards, establishing generally throughout his kingdom the court of Inquisition, which had hitherto been confined to Languedoc.\*

With all this zeal for what he believed to be the truth and will of God, Louis was no blind partisan of the papal power. At this time, Frederic II., emperor of Germany,

\* In spite of the rigour with which they were pursued, heretics (truly or falsely so called, for it is from their enemies alone that we have any account of their belief) continued to increase, more especially in the east of France. In 1239, one hundred and eighty were burned in the same flames, in the presence of eighteen bishops, in Champagne.

and Pope Gregory IX. were at enmity ; and an embassy was sent from Rome to France, conjuring the king and the nobles to head a new crusade against the emperor. The Pope's message ran thus :—"Frederic, the so-called emperor, we have condemned and deposed, and we have elected in his room Robert, the brother of the king of France. Do not hesitate therefore to accept gladly the dignity which is so freely offered. Contribute your efforts and your wealth to the maintenance of this holy cause ; for this Frederic, as the world knows, has sinned so often and so deeply, as to be past forgiveness."

Louis's character as an obedient son of the Church led Gregory to anticipate a ready compliance with his wishes ; while the rich prize offered might tempt men intent on personal or national aggrandizement. But both king and nobles returned quite another answer to the Pope's invitation. "What hardihood," said the king's counsellors, "is this of the Roman Pontiff to cast down from his throne, and rob of his inheritance, one who stands at the head of Christian princes, and that without any crime confessed or proved ! If he have deserved to forfeit his crown, it is matter for the judgment of a council . . . . We know that he has faithfully served the Lord Jesus Christ at the hazard of his life" (Frederic had been on a crusade, from whence he was hastily recalled by Gregory invading his Italian territories, but he had not failed to make a treaty with the Saracens securing the possession of the city and Holy Sepulchre to the Christians) ; "whereas the Pope has done nothing to second him while he fought for God, but has played the part of an enemy during his absence from his kingdom . . . . What care the bishops of Rome how much French blood is shed, so long as their resentment is satisfied ! Besides, if the emperor shall be brought low, is it not clear that the Pope will have all Christian princes for his slaves ?"

But when the king believed war to be just and necessary, he led his forces to the field as gallantly as any of his predecessors. The great lords of Poitou especially,

had never cordially acquiesced in the curtailment of their power by the French crown : and they once again tempted the English king, Henry III., into a fruitless invasion. Louis defeated the combined forces at Taillebourg on the Charente (1242), and again near Saintes : which city, with a portion of Saintonge, he united to the domains of the Crown. He might have deprived Henry of a much larger portion of his continental possessions ; but when some of his courtiers complained that he had granted too favourable terms to the English king, "Are not our wives sisters ! and is it not said, *Blessed are the peacemakers ?*" was his reply.

Louis had been married in his twentieth year to Margaret, eldest daughter of Bérenger, count of Provence ; and Henry, a few years afterwards, had married Margaret's younger sister, Eleanor.

In the same year in which the battle of Taillebourg was fought, Europe was roused by a tale of cruelties and disasters in Palestine, like those which had kindled the zeal of the first crusaders ; and at the same time, was thrown into alarm by the approach of another Tartar invasion. The Mongols, under the sons and successors of Ginghis Khan, had poured into Russia and Poland, overrun Hungary, and in a great battle, fought at Wollstadt, near Lignitz (1242), had utterly defeated the host of volunteer warriors gathered from all parts of Germany to arrest the advance of the barbarians. The fear of them spread far and wide ; and even the resolute spirit of Queen Blanche quailed at the thought of a Tartar invasion. "Let us comfort ourselves in God," said her son. "If these Tartars come, either we will make them return to the *Tartarus* \* whence they have issued forth, or else we ourselves will go to find in Heaven the happiness of the elect."

\* This play upon words was entirely agreeable to the opinion of that age ; for it was generally believed of the Mongols (as anciently of their kindred, the Huns) that they were *demons* sent for the punishment of men : or, at best, that they were in close intercourse and alliance with evil spirits.

Meanwhile the people of Chorasmia (or *Khowaresm*), dispossessed of their country by another host of Mongols, had poured down into Syria and Asia Minor in search of a new home. There was war between the Mussulman princes of Syria and the sultan of Egypt: the former joined themselves to the Christians of Palestine, the sultan enlisted the wandering hordes of Kharismians in his service. A multitude of these barbarians ravaged the Holy Land, sacked Jerusalem, rifled even the Holy Sepulchre, and massacred their defenceless captives by thousands in the streets of the city. The Christians and their Syrian allies mustered an army, near Gaza, but were defeated with immense loss, and now all eyes were turned for succour to the great princes of the West.

The emperor Frederic desired nothing more earnestly than to head a crusade, which should aim at the twofold object of recovering the Holy Land once again from the hands of the infidels, and of rolling back the advancing tide of Mongol barbarism which threatened to sweep over Europe. His adversary, Gregory IX., was dead, but a new pope, Innocent IV., had inherited the quarrel of his predecessor, and Frederic was still under the ban of excommunication. The crisis, however, so imperatively required union among the princes of Christendom, that terms of peace were agreed upon. Unfortunately, a dispute arose about the order of time in which the concessions promised by each party should be made; the treaty was broken off, and Innocent, thinking himself too much exposed to the emperor's resentment in Italy, fled to Genoa, and prayed the king to receive him in France.

Louis had gone with his mother and brothers and an array of nobles, to keep the feast of St. Michael, and be present at a chapter of unusual solemnity at the abbey of Cîteaux. Here, to his surprise, he was met by a company of abbots and monks from several monasteries, in number about five hundred, who fell on their knees before him, and with tears implored that he would receive and protect their father against the insults of the emperor.

Louis descended from his seat, and placed himself in like manner upon his knees before the reverend suppliants. But his reply to their supplications was dictated by a wise patriotism and policy—"that he would defend the Church as his honour required from all insults of the emperor : and no less willingly would he receive the exiled Pope into his kingdom, if his barons should so counsel him ; but that a king of France could on no occasion dispense with the counsels of his nobles."

But the barons refused, on the ground that the court of Rome was too expensive a guest ; and that if the Pope came invested with the civil powers which his predecessors had usurped, he could soon make himself sole master in France. Innocent therefore took up his abode at Lyons, which city was not then annexed to the dominions of the French crown, but under the jurisdiction of its archbishop. A numerous host of prelates assembled here in the following year (1245), proclaimed a fresh crusade, and enjoined four preparatory years of peace throughout the Western nations.

The king of France had already vowed himself to this enterprise. He had fallen dangerously ill in 1244, but recovering a little strength when apparently dying, his first words were to desire that his bed and his garments might be marked with the red cross, in token of his dedication to the Holy War. His wife and mother, his most attached friends and counsellors, and even the bishop of Paris, besought him in vain to recede from this resolution ; believing that the certain loss and peril of a crusade outweighed any advantage which could be hoped from it, and that France could ill spare the presence of her king. The bishop urged upon him, that vows uttered under the influence of feverish excitement, when the mind was suffering from disease of the body, were not binding in the sight of God, and thought he had gained his point, for Louis plucked the cross from his shoulder. But it was far otherwise. "You think," said the king, "that I was not myself when I uttered my



vow. Here is my cross, then ; take it. But *now*, you will not say that I am not in my senses ; give me back my cross then, for He who knoweth all things knoweth that food shall not pass my lips ere I am marked again with His sign." "It is the finger of God," cried those who heard him ; "His will be done !"

The next three years were spent in preparation ; not the least important part of which was an inquiry into the claims of all persons who complained that wrong had been done to them by unjust judgments, or undue exactions of money on the part of the king's officers. Richard, earl of Cornwall, took advantage of Louis's anxiety to rectify every perversion of justice, to claim the restoration of Normandy, which he said, had been wrested from John, his father, by an inequitable sentence ; and the French king, though greatly astonished at this unexpected demand, entertained it seriously ; referring the question both to his barons and to the Norman bishops. But all unanimously pronounced that forty years' possession, and the sentence of the peers of France pronounced against John, were quite sufficient to justify the French crown in retaining the province.

He earnestly desired to gain the other monarchs of Europe, the German emperor and the king of England, especially ; that the forces of all might go forth in one great armament. But the preachers of the Pope were offering indulgences for a war against the emperor ; and a multitude of warriors who would otherwise have joined the French crusaders, preferred the lighter toil of slaying excommunicated Christians in Europe. When the emperor, weary of the contest, offered to devote all his remaining days to the defence of the Holy Land, so that the Pope would but restore him to the communion of the Church, and sanction the succession of his son to the empire, King Louis himself visited the Pope, and pleaded most earnestly that these terms might be accepted. But it was of no avail. Innocent utterly refused compliance. He even besought Louis to turn his arms



against England, because both king and parliament had complained of the exorbitant exactions of the papal emissaries. But the king of France declared that he would neither break the peace to which he had sworn with a Christian people, nor work the ruin of his own brother-in-law. The prevalent discontent of the English nation, however, at the extortions of the Pope's legate, made any levy of money, or of men, for a crusade, too unpopular to be attempted. Only a small band of knights with their followers joined Louis; among whom was the famous William Longsword, the disinherited earl of Salisbury.

In August, 1248, having set his kingdom in order, and appointed Blanche, his mother, regent during his absence, Louis set sail from Aigues-Mortes, a town which he had founded at great cost in order to have a port of his own on the Mediterranean.\* Cyprus had been appointed for the rendezvous and winter quarters of the crusaders; and here the king remained until May, 1249, waiting for the reinforcements, which came in but slowly. He would have preferred Sicily for a halting-place, and to sail from thence direct to Syria; but Sicily was in the dominions of the emperor, and Louis, say French historians, feared to tarry in the states of an excommunicated monarch. Cyprus had been chosen, therefore; and it had been resolved to make sure of Egypt before proceeding to Palestine. Experience had, indeed, made it obvious that although Palestine might be conquered, it could not be permanently established as an independent Christian state, until the Mussulman power had been overthrown in the rich and populous kingdom of Egypt. But it proved, nevertheless, a fatal resolution. In May, with 50,000 men, the king set sail, and disembarked before the town of Damietta; himself being among the first to spring into the water and wade on shore, with the

\* Marseilles, and the other towns on the Mediterranean, were in the territory of the count of Provence. Aigues-Mortes is not now a port, the sea having receded considerably from the shore.

oriflamme displayed before him. A body of Saracens drawn up to oppose the landing of the French gave way before their impetuous onset, and the crusaders encamped for the night under the walls of the city. Damietta was strongly fortified and well provisioned; but the sultan lay sick at Cairo, and the hearts of his people had sunk within them at the rumour of the warlike preparations and strength of the crusading host which had been spread abroad in the East. The garrison and inhabitants of Damietta were so intimidated that they hastily resolved to evacuate the place the same night; and when day returned, the French, to their delight and surprise, found they had nothing to do but to enter and take possession.

With this unexpected piece of good fortune, however, the disasters of the expedition may be said to have begun. The king wisely took into his own keeping the well-stored magazines of the city, at which a number of the leading nobles began to murmur; and it soon appeared not only that the bond of feudal obedience was too weak to insure due subordination in the army, but that very few of its chiefs were actuated by a religious zeal at all akin to his own. Had the host at once marched on, however, they might have made the conquest of Lower Egypt within the month in which they landed. But the Nile was already rising. Louis, alarmed at the rapid increase of the waters, thought it necessary to tarry till they subsided; and five precious months were wasted at Damietta, during which the discipline of the troops became terribly impaired by the excesses in which many of their leaders indulged; while the Arabs of the Desert, whom the sultan had enlisted in his cause, took advantage of the loose watch kept in the Christian camp, prowled about the tents at night, and cut off every straggler whom they could meet with by day.

Meanwhile reinforcements arrived; the waters abated, and before the end of December the troops, now raised to 60,000 men, were in motion. It was proposed to secure

Alexandria first, if possible, in order to have a safe and commodious port for receiving supplies, and keeping the communication with Europe open. But the count of Artois, Louis's best and most beloved brother, who was full of impetuous daring, exclaimed, "Strike the head of the serpent, if you wish to kill him," and urged this view of the case so strongly that it was resolved to make at once for Cairo, the enemy's capital. With many brave warriors, there seems not to have been one experienced or skilful commander in the Christian host; and they pressed on with little or no knowledge of the difficulties that lay in their way, or the means of overcoming them. They were harassed at every point by the multitude of small canals intersecting the country; and on approaching Massourah, where a considerable Saracen force awaited their arrival, they found a channel which they could not cross at all, having neither boats nor materials for throwing a bridge across. Weeks were spent in trying to construct a causeway or mound, for the transport of the army; while their light-armed foes assailed them with darts, and javelins, and balls of *Greek fire*, a terrible missile, hitherto unknown to the soldiers, and terrifying them exceedingly. At last, an Arab came, and for a small reward offered to show them a ford. The count of Artois eagerly led his company across; and forgetting or disregarding his brother's injunction to advance no farther till supported by the body of the army, rushed forward, driving the Saracens before him till he reached the town, which he entered. With fatal security the soldiers dispersed in quest of spoil, while the Saracen leader perceiving that the count was unsupported, rallied his force, took possession of the gates, and hemmed in his adversaries. The townsmen themselves poured from the tops of their houses, stones, scalding water, and other missiles on their invaders; and in a short time the little force of the count was all but annihilated. Artois himself fell, and with him Longsword, and a number of the bravest knights in the army. As the rest of the

crusading host came up, the battle became general, and lasted till nightfall, and the combatants parted to count their losses. Those of the Saracens were easily to be repaired; those of the crusaders were irreparable; and the king, who had performed many valiant feats of arms that day, could not refrain from bitter tears, as he thought of Artois, and the gallant men who had fallen.

The next day was Ash-Wednesday, and it was observed with more than usual sorrow and humiliation in the Christian camp. On Friday there was another battle, with heavy loss of life, but the crusaders kept their ground. The son of the late sultan (who had died during the advance of the French) was now in their front, with a great army, cutting off all prospect of a successful issue; yet they unhappily conceived that to retreat would imply unfaithfulness to the sacred cause they had in hand. They tarried, therefore, on the field of battle, sown with corpses. Multitudes of dead bodies had been thrown into the river; at the end of eight or ten days they rose to the surface, and covered the water from bank to bank to the distance of a stone's throw. The consequence of all this was a horrible infectious disorder, which carried off a large proportion of those who had escaped the dangers of battle. The king was urged to take refuge in one of the vessels on the river, but refused, saying, "We will abide together, I and my people, and share the same lot." More skilled in works of mercy than in the art of war, he went about all day to relieve the sick and console the dying. The power of his example was felt throughout the camp, and men who would have broken out into disorder at common times, bore with patience the misery which their king shared with them so bravely.

At length, Louis himself was attacked with dysentery; and then, indeed, the stoutest hearts began to quail, and peace at any price was the prevailing thought. Negotiations were opened with the Saracen leaders, and terms

were agreed on. Damietta was to be restored on the one side : Jerusalem, and the other places in Palestine recently taken from the Christians, on the other. But when it came to the question of sureties for the due fulfilment of the treaty, the Saracens insolently demanded the king himself. Louis would willingly have purchased the safety of his army with his own liberty, but his nobles would not hear of it. "Never!" said they. "Let us perish, if it must be so, rather than leave our king in prison."

Since peace could not be had, it was necessary to retreat without loss of time ; and with due precautions this might perhaps have been safely accomplished. The king, though very weak, was able to sit on horse-back, and preferring the post of danger, remained with the rear-guard ; but those who conducted the advance fell into confusion, harassed by the watchful enemy incessantly ; and after one day's terrible march, or rather massacre, pursued by Mussulman boats on the water, and Mussulman cavalry on land, Louis and all his followers were either slain or taken prisoners. Apostasy or instant death was the alternative offered by the victors to many of the prisoners : numbers did apostatize, and were reserved for captivity, while those who continued true to their faith were immediately put to the sword.

Then the conquerors and the conquered returned together to Massourah ; the king of France in a war-boat escorted by Egyptian vessels ; while his humbled captains and soldiers, with their hands tied behind them, were driven like cattle to their prison, the Egyptian and Arab troops lining either bank of the river, and marching to the sound of trumpet and kettledrum.

Queen Margaret during all this unhappy campaign had remained at Damietta, tormented through weary weeks with rumours of evil, which grew at last into the certainty of defeat and ruin. Dreading lest she should fall into the hands of the Saracens (who, she imagined, were already close upon the city), she threw herself on



her knees before an old knight who was in constant attendance upon her, and besought one favour as a last proof of his fidelity. "The Saracens may storm this town," she said: "if they take it, I charge you to cut off my head before I become their prisoner." "I was thinking of it, madam," said the old man. The enemy did not however attack Damietta; Margaret was able to preserve it as a surety in some degree for her husband's safety, and here, during the first week of his captivity, she gave birth to a son, aptly named *Tristan*, the *child of sorrow*.

Louis, who was so worn with sickness and fatigue at the time of his capture, that he seemed almost dying, had been revived by the care of an Arab physician; but he was confined with great severity, at first, in a narrow cell, and with his arms fettered. The sultan, however, was not ill-disposed towards his prisoner; and it was not long before terms of ransom were proposed. These were the restoration of Damietta, and a large ransom in money for the king himself and his principal followers; the remainder of the Christian prisoners to be released when the king should send a further sum: in all, 400,000 livres in gold. These terms had hardly been agreed to, when by a sudden revolution the sultan was murdered, and the successful leaders of the rebellion threatened to massacre instead of releasing the prisoners; especially when Louis, being required by them to promise the execution of the treaty with an oath expressed in terms which he considered utterly profane, refused, declaring that he would rather die as a Christian should, than offend against God by taking such words into his lips.

But at last the king was conducted under a strong Saracen guard to the sea-shore, and received on board a Genoese vessel; Queen Margaret having already been conveyed on board ship, and Damietta restored to the Mussulmans. Louis and his companions sailed to Acre; and there he long and very seriously considered with the friends and trusty counsellors who yet remained to him, whether he ought to return immediately to France, or



continue in the East. All but four urged him to return ; but when all had given their opinion, the king said he believed that he ought to remain ; adding, " With my mother to rule my kingdom, and brave men to defend it, there is no fear that it will suffer damage in my absence. But if I depart, Jerusalem is lost, for none will have the courage to stay there if I turn my back upon it just now ; and how can I ruin the cause which I came hither to maintain and defend ? "

He gave leave to all who desired it to return ; and his brothers, and many more, availed themselves of the permission. He himself, with some faithful friends, remained four years longer in the East, doing what he could to strengthen the Christian cause there, and watching anxiously for an opportunity of achieving a decisive deliverance for the Holy Land. His best hope of success lay in the dissensions which divided the Mussulmans themselves, who, instead of uniting under one head, as in the days of Saladin, had split into a multitude of petty states, and made war upon one another. But no reinforcement of knights or soldiers reached the king from Europe ; the utmost he could do was to strengthen the fortifications and increase the garrisons of the Christian towns in Palestine.

He was not, however, unmindful of the interests of his own kingdom. He meditated a variety of improvements to be introduced by degrees into the laws and the administration of justice ; and with this view he issued in the second year of his residence in Syria an edict establishing the *Parliament of Paris*, which shall be more particularly described in another chapter. In France, the poor people of the land had taken a singular but mistaken way of showing their love and loyalty for their absent king. When the news of his imprisonment in Egypt reached France, and filled the kingdom with mourning, a man suddenly appeared, affirming that the Virgin Mary had sent him a letter, ordering him to assemble all the Christian shepherds, or *pastoureux*, that

he could collect, and march at their head to the deliverance of their king; for the victory was refused to the mighty, but promised to the weak and lowly. This pretender, or enthusiast, had no learning, but much natural eloquence, and drew an astonishing number of shepherds after him; but to these simple, well-meaning peasants a great number of thieves and vagabonds presently joined themselves. The clergy began to excommunicate them, and in revenge they murdered several priests at Orleans. Queen Blanche, who had favoured the association of the shepherds, now employed all her power to dissolve it; the leaders were slain, and the populace, who had honoured the *pastoureaux* as servants of the king and the Virgin, now pursued them with threats and violence. The association had, however, lasted some months, and is known in the history of the time as the *Crusade of the Pastoureaux*.

The government of the Queen Regent came to an end rather suddenly in December, 1253. "For twenty-six years together hers had been the dominant will in France; and at the age of sixty-four her vigour was unabated, and her rule as firm as ever." But her strength suddenly failed, and feeling that death drew near, she retired from the court to a religious house, and closed her life a few days after taking the vows of the order.

The news of her death was received by Louis with the deepest sorrow. It was necessary now that he should return home without delay; but he tore himself with regret from Palestine. After a stormy and dangerous voyage, he reached France in July, 1254. He was in his fortieth year when he returned to his kingdom; and now only could he be said fully to assume the supreme authority, for during the lifetime of Queen Blanche his deference for her wise and noble character withheld him from giving full scope to his own capacity for government. His subjects had received him with the warmest welcome. But amidst the general rejoicing the countenance of Louis was often sad; his words, though always

gentle and courteous, were few ; and his thoughts reverted ever and anon to those fatal eastern plains where the bones of a thousand brave companions were mouldering into dust. It was long ere he resumed in any degree his former gaiety of demeanour. He rarely assumed his robes of ceremony, seldom shared personally in the banquets which he provided for his courtiers ; and while he worked indefatigably for the good of France, his people saw with grief that he still wore the cross.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Reforms effected by the King in the Administration of Justice :  
 His own wise and equitable Government.—Affairs in Provence :  
 Its final subjugation under Charles of Anjou.—Charles obtains  
 the kingdom of Naples : His Tyranny.—New Disasters in the  
 East.—Second Crusade of Louis IX. : His Closing Days.—  
 Disastrous Close of the Crusade.

FROM 1254 A.D. TO 1270.

THE first care of Louis on returning to his kingdom was to reform some of the abuses which impeded the due administration of justice. New regulations were made, tending to protect accused persons from being treated as guilty before it had been proved that they were so ; to restrain the power of imprisonment for debt, which had often been very cruelly abused ; and to prevent the corruption of the judges by bribery. This last object was of the most pressing importance, for no excellence of the laws could secure even-handed justice at a time when the judges sold it almost openly even in Paris itself, under the very eyes of the sovereign. For a long while past the office of provost, or chief magistrate of the city, had been sold by the government to the highest bidder. The provost, in his turn, bartered away justice for gifts. " Outrages of all kinds were frequent, in which wild young gentlemen were the offenders, and the common people were the sufferers ; but a bribe to the provost, or the influence of powerful friends, insured impunity for the guilty parties, and the injured had no redress. Perjury carried the day against honesty ; and property at last was so imperfectly protected, that men who had anything to lose began to desert the king's lands, and to seek a safer home elsewhere." Louis resolved that the office of

provost should no longer be saleable ; and he sought far and wide over France for a man who could be trusted to do justice with unbending firmness and impartiality. One Stephen Boileau was found, whose term of office made a blessed era in Paris for peaceable well-disposed citizens. No malefactor could escape his vigilance ; no bribe could corrupt his integrity ; and the very face of the neighbouring country was changed, for the cultivators who had abandoned their farms returned to them now that they could till the land and reap its fruits in quietness.

In a similar spirit the king endeavoured to reform all the other courts in his domains where similar evils had existed. But he desired the meanest of his subjects to have the right of appeal from his judges to himself ; regarding his kingdom as a great family and household, of which he was the responsible head, and feeling like a father who had failed in duty to his children, if wrong were done anywhere which he had the power to prevent.

"Often," says Joinville, his faithful officer and biographer, "I have seen him after he had heard mass, in summer, come out to the forest of Vincennes, and seat himself at the foot of an oak and make us all sit round him. And those who had any business, came and spoke to him without any officer giving them hindrance. And sometimes he would come to the garden of Paris, and have carpets spread for us to sit near him ; and then he administered justice to his people as he did at Vincennes."

But it has been well said of Louis IX. that "he loved his people only less than he loved justice ;" and though of a most clement and merciful nature, he felt that rigorous justice was the truest humanity, in an age when society might almost be described as in a state of universal disorder. In vain did Queen Margaret and all her ladies entreat him to spare a woman of rank, who had murdered her husband, the shame of a public execution : "Open punishments are most for the public good," was his answer. In vain, also, did the friends of a rich citizen, convicted of blasphemy, entreat the king to remit

the severe penalty attached to that crime, and which was nothing less than the marking the lips, or the forehead, with a hot iron. "I had rather suffer punishment myself than suffer sin to go unpunished," replied Louis; and the words of the wise man, "He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse," were often on his lips, still oftener in his remembrance.

It is necessary to observe, that the king could only *fully* carry out his improvements in law and justice within the boundaries of his own domains. Under the feudal system, he had not the power to enforce them universally, for the great lords were severally legislators in their own territories—were indeed petty kings, as we have seen before. But "it was a leading object of his policy to protect the lower classes of his subjects against the tyrannical oppression of the aristocracy,\* and to unite the interests of the Crown and the people against that privileged order which was equally hostile to the independence of both." By this course of action he hoped "to secure at least for future ages the blessings which he might despair effectually to impart to his own." And the very great accession of territory which had fallen under the immediate dominion of the Crown, during the last half-century, by the acquisition of Normandy, Languedoc, and other provinces, gave the king, even under the present adjustment of power, a wide field in which to operate the changes he desired.

\* The manner in which they were oppressed sometimes, may be guessed from the fact, that in this very reign, one of the haughtiest and most powerful lords of the kingdom, the Sire de Coucy, caused three children to be hanged for hunting rabbits. Louis condemned him to death. But the rest of the nobility united with so much determination to preserve the life of their fellow-noble, and the prerogatives of their order, that the king was obliged to commute the punishment for an enormous fine. And even in this he was thought to have stretched the limit of his authority to the utmost. The superlative pride of the house of Coucy used to be expressed in the couplet:—

"Ne suis ni roi, ni duc aussi,  
Je suis le Sire de Coucy."



One of the first evils he attacked is thus described by an old writer :—"A very ill custom of warfare used to prevail in the kingdom of France. When any person had killed or wounded another, the injured man, or, if he were dead, his friends, looked to revenge themselves on the kindred of the offender, though they lived at how great a distance soever, and knew nothing of the matter ; and therefore they went in search of them by night or day, and as soon as they had found one of them, killed him, or maimed, or beat him, without any warning or putting him on his guard, though he knew nothing of the misdeed that his kinsman had committed." This abominable practice was so firmly established that the king could not sweep it away at once. In order to control it, he enacted that *forty days* should always elapse after the first injury, before the aggrieved party, or his friends, began to avenge the wrong on the kinsmen of the wrong-doer, in order that, being forewarned, they might purchase peace, or else make themselves ready for war. This forty days' truce, commonly called "the *king's quarantine*," had been first devised by Philip Augustus, but he could not enforce its observance ; now, however, Louis confirmed and established it, and the gradual cessation of these private wars dates from this time. The delay allowed time for the heat of anger and revenge to cool ; and by another enactment it was established that a man could claim, either of his adversary or his suzerain, that his cause should not be decided by arms, but by trial in a court of justice.

The *judicial combat* he peremptorily forbade in the territories where his will was law, though this custom was more consonant to the feelings and manners of a feudal age than even that of private war.

In a great number of the suits which were tried in the feudal courts, the accused or defeated parties had the liberty of challenging the adverse witnesses and judges to actual combat. This was called referring the cause to the judgment of God ; and these judicial combats took

place ordinarily with much ceremony, and in the presence of a multitude of spectators. Louis, who knew too well that, in this present evil world, might is sometimes permitted to triumph over right, and knew also that many a bold champion entered the lists to maintain a lie, and died in the fight, unconfessed and unforgiven, regarded the custom with abhorrence.

We have said already that the king wished his people, if they thought themselves wronged by his judges, to appeal to himself. It was already the right of every vassal to appeal from the sentence of his lord to his lord's suzerain. The king encouraged the use of this right so much, that suitors of every class repaired to the royal courts, and learnt to look to the throne as the fountain of justice. The duke of Brittany alone had the right of judging without appeal to the king.

The exemption of the clergy from secular jurisdiction had become a very great evil. Priests guilty of scandalous offences escaped, because the officers of justice might not lay hands upon them. Louis strove to obtain the concurrence and aid of the court of Rome for the removal of this abuse, but with little success. All that the Pope (Alexander IV.) would grant to his urgent entreaties was this, that the royal judges should not be excommunicated for arresting priests who were notoriously guilty of murder or other great crimes; but, adds the Pope, "we by no means give them leave to proceed to such arrests, nor approve of their doing so."

The king had great reverence for the censures of the Church and for its authorities, but he would not wittingly sanction any misuse of ecclesiastical authority. Joinville gives an interesting instance of this; saying, "Several bishops came one day to the king at his palace; and one of them, Guy d'Auxerre, said to him, 'Sire, these archbishops and bishops whom you see before you charge me to tell you that Christendom is falling into ruin in your hands.' The king crossed himself, and asked, 'How is that?' 'Sire,' replied the bishop of Auxerre, 'men

make no account of excommunication in these days ; they will not make satisfaction to the Church ; they do not fear even to die without being absolved. The bishops pray you, sire, and require you, by the love of God, to command all your provosts and bailiffs\* to compel persons who have been under excommunication a year and a day to seek absolution, by the seizure of their goods.' The king answered that he would make the order willingly in the case of persons who were in fault ; but the bishop said that it did not belong to the king to determine whether they had deserved to be excommunicated or not. Then the king said that he would give no other order, for it would be contrary to the will of God, and against all reason, that he should compel people to seek absolution who had been wrongfully excommunicated. 'And I will give you an example of that,' he continued. 'The count of Brittany, who was under excommunication, and who appealed against the sentence of the bishops during seven years ; and at last the Pope condemned them all. Now, if I had obliged the count to seek absolution at the end of the first year, I should have wronged him and displeased God.'"

The right of coining money enjoyed by the great feudal nobles had been abused very much to the disadvantage of the people. In the days of Louis IX. there were no less than eighty lords who had mints of their own, and several of them had forbidden any coin but their own to be circulated in their territories ; besides which they altered the value of their coinage as they chose. The king did what he could to remedy the evil by issuing a decree that his own royal coinage should be current all over the kingdom, and it soon became much more popular than that of the various feudal chiefs.

The conscience of this upright monarch was long dis-

\* Bailiffs ("Baillifs" or *Baillis*) were judges, each having a certain district under his jurisdiction. Provosts were magistrates, who had to do especially with causes in which commoners were concerned.

turbed by doubts as to whether the French crown had, strictly speaking, *a right* to those valuable provinces of which Philip Augustus had dispossessed King John. At the same time, the fruitless, ill-conceived invasions of Henry III., several times repeated, might well have provoked a less scrupulous sovereign to confiscate other territories. Instead of doing this, however, he restored to the English king Perigord, the Limousin, and whatever had been taken from him beyond the Garonne ; Henry, on his part, renouncing all claim to Normandy, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, and Poitou ; and thirty years of peace between England and France were the result of this agreement.

Well would it have been had the brothers of Louis been like himself. They were two ; Alphonso, count of Poitiers and Toulouse ; and Charles, count of Anjou ; both of them selfish, grasping princes. Alphonso had married the daughter of the unfortunate Raymond, last earl of Toulouse, and had succeeded to the government of that dependency. Charles, who possessed by far the most ability, had unhappily been placed in the position of an independent prince, and distinguished himself by most tyrannical cruelty. The last native count of Provence (the father-in-law both of Louis IX. and of Henry III.) had died leaving his dominions and one unmarried daughter to the care of guardians, who offered Louis to give both the one and the other to his brother Anjou. The offer was accepted. Charles was married to Beatrice of Provence, and took possession of the country, to the great regret of the inhabitants, whose aversion to a foreign count, and especially to one of French race, was unequivocal. They had before them the example of what their neighbours in Languedoc had suffered, and of the state of subjection to which they had been reduced.

“Instead of a brave lord,” says one of their contemporary poets, “the Provençals are to have a master ; they may no longer build towers or castles ; they will no

longer dare to bear shield or lance before the French. May they die rather than be reduced to such a condition !” These fears were soon realized. All Provence was filled with foreign officers, who, treating the natives as subjects by conquest, levied enormous contributions, confiscated estates, and imprisoned and put to death the owners without trial.

At first these excesses met with little resistance, because the clergy (“making itself,” in the words of an old writer, “a whetstone for the swords of the French”) upheld their domination by the terrible menace of a crusade. Things were at this point when the king of France, departing for the crusade, took his brother Charles with him. News soon came that the count had been made prisoner by the Saracens, and there was universal joy in Provence. The cities of Aix, Arles, Avignon, and Marseilles made open preparation for war, repairing their fortifications and collecting provisions and arms.

But the captivity of Charles was not of long duration ; and we have seen that immediately on his arrival at Acre he hastened to return to Europe. He began by devastating the whole district of Arles ; the city was then rigorously blockaded, till extremity of dearth and suffering forced the inhabitants to surrender. Avignon, terrified by the fate of Arles, opened its gates to the count of Poitou, who had come to reinforce his brother ; but at Marseilles, the citizens of every degree took up arms, and putting out to sea attacked the count's fleet. After a long struggle, however, and sustaining two sieges, the Marseillaise were forced to surrender, and the whole of Provence was reduced to subjection. Nor did its cities ever recover the very high degree of liberty and prosperity which had formerly distinguished them.

The worst of Charles was to come. Fourteen years after his return from the East, he obtained his brother's permission to accept the crown of Naples and Sicily (1264). On the death of the emperor Frederic II., his son Conrad had inherited his Neapolitan dominions,

and had encountered from Pope Innocent IV. the same implacable opposition which had been the lot of his father. He lived but a few years ; and at his death, his illegitimate brother, Manfred, usurped the crown of Naples and Sicily, to the prejudice of the lawful heir, Conrad's own son Conradin. Manfred exercised with rigour the rights he had unlawfully assumed, and disavowed all homage to the Pope, who claimed to be suzerain lord of the kingdom of Naples. Innocent excommunicated Manfred, and issued a bull assigning the kingdom to Prince Edmund of England, second son of Henry III. His successor, Alexander IV., issued another bull confirming this grant, and also released Henry from his vow to go on crusade, on condition that he would prosecute the war against Manfred in Italy. Very much treasure had accordingly been wasted by Henry in this cause, when Pope Alexander died.

His successor, Urban IV., a Frenchman, had recourse to King Louis, hoping for the assistance of a French army to war against Manfred, who had gained rather than lost strength in the struggle with Alexander ; and he offered Louis the crown of Naples for either of his younger sons. Louis refused, objecting that two preceding popes had already conferred that kingdom on Prince Edmund ; and although Urban set aside this objection, the king would not recall his refusal. But he permitted his brother Charles to treat with the Pope on his own account ; and by Clement IV., the successor of Urban, Charles was crowned king of Naples in the Vatican. With the help of the French clergy, who preached up the Italian expedition as another crusade, he was able to assemble a considerable army. A brief campaign decided the fate of Naples ; and in the battle of Beneventum (1266), Manfred lost both his kingdom and his life.

Charles proved a most cruel and arbitrary sovereign ; and the nobles of France and Provence, who had been attracted to his standard by the hope of gain as well as



by the promise of *Indulgences*, settled down on the confiscated lands of Apulia and Sicily, and oppressed the people with unbearable rapine and violence. Italy rang with complaints, and even the Pope protested against the lawless government of the despot whom he had crowned. Conradin, who was only fifteen years of age, but of a very generous and valiant spirit, resolved to make one struggle for his father's kingdom. With a comparatively scanty following he encountered his powerful rival in a great battle, was defeated and made prisoner. And after a mock trial on an equally mock charge of treason, Charles had the gallant boy judicially murdered on a scaffold (1268).

Louis had no share in these foul deeds. But it is the one blot of his reign that his own subjects, whom he might have forbidden to fight in such a quarrel, upheld the tyranny of Charles of Anjou, and enriched themselves by the plunder of the unhappy kingdom made subject to his rule. Thirteen years had elapsed since the return of the king from the East, when evil tidings came once more from Palestine, to draw him away from his country, and put an end to a rule under which France had both reposed in peace, and grown more powerful and more honoured than in any former reign. An oriental chief, named Bendoezar, had made himself lord of Egypt and Syria. He had assailed the towns held by Christian garrisons which Louis had taken so much pains to strengthen. Caesarea, Jaffa, and others were taken; and all that remained were in danger. Once more the Pope summoned the princes and people of Europe to take the cross; but the summons met generally a faint response. Louis, however, needed no reminding. The vow made twenty-three years before when he lay on a sick-bed was as fresh in his memory, and as binding on his conscience, as ever. He resolved that all the succour he could give should be afforded to his afflicted fellow-Christians in Palestine: and with that view summoned his lords to Paris, in May, 1267, and announced to them his intention

of leading a new crusade. Many knights and nobles vowed themselves to the war, but without any enthusiasm. It was only that they would follow their king, while numbers of them secretly mourned over the resolve he had taken. Some refused, and amongst them his most faithful friend and servant, Joinville, who declared that his people had suffered such grievous wrong and oppression when he was beyond sea before, that he could not leave them again, lest they should be totally ruined. "Great blame," he says, "had they who encouraged the king to go, weak as he was in body, unable to sit on horseback. So feeble was he, that he suffered me to carry him in my arms from the house of the count of Auxerre, where I took my leave of him; and yet, low as he was brought, if he had stayed in France he might have lived a good while and done much good."

Between the farewell of which Joinville here speaks, and the convention of the lords at Paris, three years had elapsed; so long did it take to make all the necessary arrangements for the conduct of the crusade, and for the welfare of the kingdom in the absence of its sovereign. In the mean time, Bendoclar had taken and sacked Antioch, selling the women into slavery, and slaying all the men, 17,000 in number. But not even this disaster, seconded by Louis's urgent solicitations, brought many recruits to the crusading force. Prince Edward, the heir of England, indeed took the cross, and with him a hundred of the bravest English knights.

In the summer of 1270, Louis again sailed from Aigues-Mortes, accompanied by two of his sons; the eldest, a youth of great promise, had died several years before. Cagliari was the place appointed for the muster of the forces, and from Cagliari they sailed to Tunis; a most circuitous route to the Holy Land; the choice of which on the part of Louis is accounted for by some friendly communications which had been passing between himself and the king of Tunis, through the medium of a Moorish embassy sent to Paris. But it was believed

that Charles of Anjou had mainly suggested and promoted this line of proceeding, because he hoped to render Tunis a fief of his own kingdom of Naples ; while Louis, with purer aims, trusted to win the Tunisian king to Christianity, and secure his alliance and help in an attack on Egypt.

Three days' sail from Cagliari brought the crusading fleet to Tunis. They disembarked off Carthage, to find themselves in an island of sand without shade or water, beneath a burning sun. Far from showing any disposition to welcome the strangers, the king of Tunis had prepared an army for the defence of his city. The only advantage obtained by the crusaders, was the capture of Carthage, a castle amidst a heap of ruins. The king had promised to wait at this place for the arrival of his brother Charles, who was to bring large reinforcements ; but it was a fatal agreement. Tunis could only be taken by a prolonged blockade, and the French had no sooner drawn their lines round the city, than pestilence broke out amongst them, and struck down some of the foremost knights and nobles. Amongst them was the king's second son, *John Tristan*, the "Child of Sorrow," born at Damietta. The king himself was attacked at last. He lingered three weeks, and employed his last days in dictating his dying counsels to Philip, his third son, become by the death of his elder brothers the heir of his father's throne.

"Fair son," said the king, "the first thing that I would teach thee is that thou love God ; for without this love can no man be saved. . . Be of a tender, pitiful heart for the poor and the feeble, support and help them as thou canst find occasion. Maintain the good customs of the realm, and destroy the bad. Do not covet the goods of thy subjects, and burden them not either with taxes or talliage. Never stir up war against Christian men unless it is of the greatest necessity. If thou findest that thou art possessed of anything wrongfully, restore it immediately, even though it came to thee from thy ancestors,

and however great the matter may be, in land, or in money. Render justice to thy people without turning to the right hand or to the left ; but side with the poor man till the truth of the case is made clear. Bestow the benefices of the Church on good men, of spotless life, and take counsel herein with men of probity. . .” These and many more such counsels fell from the lips of the dying king and father, mingled with admonitions to prayer, to the diligent hearing of Holy Scripture, and other pious observances.

His remaining days were given almost wholly to prayer ; praises of God on his own behalf being mingled almost unceasingly with petitions for his suffering people. Following to the last the practices of bodily mortification which he had conscientiously pursued through life, he desired, some hours before his death, to be placed on a bed of ashes, and there awaited his last summons. For a time, the power of speech seemed gone, then his lips moved, and the watchers bending over him heard him say in feeble tones, “ For the love of God, let something be done to preach the gospel in Tunis. Who is there that we can send thither ? ” He slumbered awhile, and awoke with the cry, “ Jerusalem ! Let us go to Jerusalem ; ” and so passed away to his rest, August 25th, 1270.

Twenty-seven years after his death he was canonized ; and never, perhaps, has the Church of Rome bestowed that dignity on any one whom men of differing times and creeds and countries have more willingly agreed to call *saint*, than this good king.

The same day that his brother died, Charles of Anjou, with the expected force, sailed into the port ; nevertheless the crusaders remained inactive, the only object of the king of Sicily being to further his own interest. The king of Tunis offered, at length, to pay him a large tribute, and to release all the Christian captives he had taken ; and the French and Sicilian princes and lords, weary with the sickness and hardships of the camp, and little concerned to effect any deliverance in Palestine, resolved to

return home without loss of time. The English alone refused ; Prince Edward indignantly declaring, " I will enter Acre, though only Fowin, my groom, should follow me ! " and he accordingly proceeded with his little band of knights to Syria.

The rest of the host sailed for Europe. As the fleet neared Sicily, a great storm arose and wrecked eighteen vessels ; the whole of the rich tribute paid by the king of Tunis was swallowed up by the sea, and the crusaders thought they saw in this the punishment which Heaven had sent on them for the non-fulfilment of their vow to war against the infidels. But they had left half their number behind them, cut off by plague or fever, buried in the African sands ; and the successor of St. Louis returned to France preceded by five coffins, containing the bodies of his father and brother, his wife, his son, and his brother-in-law, Thibault II., earl of Champagne and king of Navarre.

*Note 1.*—Robert de Sorbon, the confessor of St. Louis, founded in this reign the college, named after him the *Sorbonne*, which became the seat of the famous school of theology whose decisions had so much weight in France and Christendom generally, that it was entitled the Permanent Council of Gaul.

*Note 2.*—The writings, both in prose and poetry, of the men who flourished about this time, but especially the "*Chronicles of the Sire de Joinville*," are the most curious and interesting monuments of ancient French literature.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Attempts of Louis IX. to propagate the Gospel in Asia : Mission of Rubruquis.—Encouragement of Learning : Thomas Aquinas.—*La Sainte Chapelle*.—Alteration effected in the Legal Customs and Institutions of the Kingdom : Parliament of Paris instituted.

WHILE endeavouring to sustain the Christian cause in the East by force of arms, St. Louis had not overlooked milder methods of promoting the knowledge of the truth. A rumour had been spread abroad that some of the Mongol princes were, at least, favourably disposed towards Christianity. One of them, Sartach, who commanded the Tartar armies to the north of the Caspian, had actually, it was said, become a convert. It happened at the very time when this rumour prevailed, and while Louis was engaged in strengthening the Christian force in Palestine, that Erkaltay, a Mongol prince, who was attacking the Saracens from the side of Persia, sent an embassy to the French king in order to cement an alliance founded in common interest. The tenour of the khan's letter to King Louis has been variously reported, some saying that he professed his intention of embracing Christianity ; but it is certain that the ambassadors went to mass, and conformed to all the religious observances of their Christian hosts. In consequence, Louis sent an embassy to Erkaltay, with a present of a portion of (what the good king religiously believed to be) the wood of the true cross, and bearing a letter in which he invited the khan to receive the Gospel, and to acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. What reception the ambassadors met with is not known. It was otherwise with a mission which King Louis sent in 1253 to Prince Sartach, whose territories were between the Don and



the Volga. The head of the mission was William de Rubruquis (or more properly, *Van Ruysbroeck*), a Minorite friar from Flanders. He was charged to observe narrowly what was the religion of the Tartar prince, and if it should appear that he had really adopted the Christian faith, to confirm and instruct him therein, as far as possible.

Rubruquis travelled from the banks of the Don quite into the heart of Asia; visiting several Tartar courts and encampments, and was not unkindly treated, though he found no trace of a disposition to receive Christianity, the Tartar princes appearing to be very indifferent to all religious creeds. The missionaries were at length conducted to the grand khan himself, at whose court they found a great multitude of French and other European prisoners, who, notwithstanding their captivity, were in prosperous circumstances, the khan employing them to manufacture arms, and practise a variety of useful and ornamental arts quite unknown to the Tartars. An ingenious Parisian goldsmith, especially, was in high favour with the khan. From him and his companions, Rubruquis learnt many particulars respecting the customs and religions of the nations of Central Asia. About fifty years before that time, a Mongol prince of the Nestorian Christians had reigned over some of the tribes about Lake Balkash, and had perished in 1203, in the wars with Ginghis Khan; and there were many Nestorians dwelling amongst the Mongols, and to all appearance much assimilated with them.

After the king's return to France, Rubruquis completed his travels in safety; and in the presence of the royal family assembled at Paris, he narrated all his adventures. They excited very great interest then, and are interesting still, though not in the same degree. The king caused the narrative to be carefully laid up amongst his literary treasures, as containing the best and almost the only information concerning several Eastern countries which had yet been obtained. For the fulfilment of his bene-

volent hopes respecting the conversion of the people, he was obliged to wait ; hoping in the Divine mercy that it should in some future time be brought about.

Louis took much pains to gather valuable books from all quarters, employing learned men to multiply copies of them ; and entertaining with favour all the best scholars, architects, and musicians whom he could find, but chiefly those whose talents were consecrated to the service of religion. He delighted himself both to learn and teach ; and might often be found in the hall which he had added to La Sainte Chapelle for the lectures of scholars and divines, either listening, or explaining to more youthful students, the difficulties which perplexed them. Amongst the men in whose society he chiefly delighted, was the famous Thomas Aquinas, whose unworldliness recommended him to the king's favour equally with his prodigious learning. It is related of Aquinas, that even at the royal table he would become so absorbed in some profound speculation or train of reasoning, as to forget all around him. One day, being at supper with the king, he remained silent a long while, and then suddenly struck the table with his hand, exclaiming, "A decisive argument ! The Manicheans could never answer it." Reminded by a friend at whose table he was sitting, he began to make an apology ; but Louis, in no wise offended, was only anxious to get hold of the unanswerable argument against the Manicheans, and called one of his secretaries to come and take it down immediately.

The *Sainte Chapelle* above mentioned, a gem of architecture, was reared by St. Louis to receive a relic of extraordinary sacredness. The very crown of thorns once placed on the brows of the Redeemer was said to have been preserved at Constantinople ; and the titular emperor Baldwin, who had been expelled from his capital, presented it to Louis, in return for large gifts of money, wherewith to hire troops who should reinstate him. No doubts concerning the genuineness of this relic appear to have disturbed the mind of the king, or of his subjects.

Barefooted, and clad only in a shirt, Louis and his brother of Artois went to receive it outside the walls of Paris, and, accompanied by a great crowd of bishops, nobles, and men of every degree, chanting solemn litanies, they brought it in procession to the church of Notre Dame. But the king destined it to a shrine in the closest proximity to his own royal dwelling, and the beautiful chapel was accordingly added to the palace of the city, which was then the abode of French kings, but has long since become the *Palais de Justice*, in which the chief law-courts of the kingdom are held.

Before quite passing away from the reign of St. Louis, it is necessary to take some notice of the alteration which he effected in the legal customs and institutions of France. We have seen that, under the feudal system, each great vassal of the Crown held courts of his own, at which his own vassals were bound to attend, either as witnesses or judges. With their aid and consent, the suzerain lord, at these courts, tried all persons who had committed offences against himself or his vassals, imposed fines and taxes, and made regulations for the government of his own territory. The lords of these great fiefs, in their turn, composed the royal court or council held by the king, in which laws were made affecting the whole kingdom. But St. Louis was the first to organize the Parliament of Paris, or supreme court of justice. He made it to consist of three of the great lords or barons, three bishops, eighteen knights, and thirty-seven men learned in the law, of whom twenty were to be in holy orders.

These students of the law had not merely acquainted themselves with the laws which had formerly ruled the various races settled in Gaul, and with the feudal laws and customs which had superseded all others during the last two hundred and fifty years; but they had studied with especial care and attention the Roman law, which had now become a favourite subject with the learned men of Europe, and which, indeed, they were wont to call "the perfection of wisdom." At first the lawyers

occupied a subordinate, humble position in the parliament, compared with the men of high office or noble birth, with whom they were associated ; but they soon became really the most important persons there.

The feudal lords had never found much difficulty in judging the causes which came before them in their own courts ; for if the matter proved too subtle and perplexing for their decision, they tried the point at issue by the ordeal, or by mortal combat. But the king had forbidden a resort to these modes of trial, and required that all causes should be tried by rules of law, and according to evidence. This proved far too difficult and tedious a task for warriors and nobles, few (or none) of whom could so much as read the laws by which they were to judge. It was the task of their legal colleagues to expound the laws applicable to each case, and to suggest the sentence which they required.

For a time the barons and knights listened (or seemed to listen) to the legal explanations and arguments of their learned associates ; but it was a weary task for them, and it touched their pride also, that they should have, as it were, to take their lessons from these lawyers, whom they looked down upon as men of mean condition—mere commoners.

When Louis IX. no longer existed to animate their loyalty, and induce them to comply with his wishes, the mingled weariness and mortification of these parliamentary attendances became too much for their patience. They ceased, in general, to take any share in the proceedings, and left the lawyers, or, as they were termed, counsellors, to themselves. The latter, finding themselves by this means in a more important position than at first, proceeded, step by step, to enlarge their authority, drawing to themselves the causes which hitherto had been tried in other courts ; until, about fifty years after its first institution, the Parliament of Paris had become the supreme court of law in all that part of France which was not under the government of the chief (and all but inde-

pendent) feudal princes. The next step was to obtain that the parliamentary counsellors should be appointed for life ; for at first the king chose them as he pleased, and could at any time dismiss them, and appoint others in their place. After another hundred years had gone by, they obtained the privilege of transmitting their office to their sons ; and from this time a new order of nobility, that of the *gown*, as it was called (*"noblesse de la robe"*), grew up in the kingdom, and the legal studies and public distinctions appropriate to the magistracy became the exclusive patrimony of a certain number of families. This magisterial nobility next claimed an equality of rights and privileges with the feudal and military nobles. This object also they at length attained to, and thenceforward were delivered from all the taxes and other public burdens which were imposed upon the commoners of the kingdom (or, as they were termed in France, *roturiers*).

The institution of the parliament contributed very much to the increase of the royal power ; for the counsellors used their knowledge of law so as to augment, by all means, the authority of the Crown, and to restrain and diminish that of the feudal lords.

Shortly before his departure for Tunis, the king issued a code of laws\* by his own sole authority. The peers and barons raised some objections to this proceeding, but the parliamentary counsellors rejoined, "We may not say that the king is *of right* the lawgiver. But it is admitted that he may set forth laws for the government of the realm, and it is proper to obey them, because we are bound to suppose them to result from a wisdom superior to that of other men." In St. Louis's time this supposition might be safely indulged ; for besides that no man in the whole kingdom bestowed so much anxious thought and consideration on the best means of securing the well-being of all classes and conditions of his subjects,

\* Known by the title "*Etablissements de St. Louis.*"



he possessed "a firm good sense, which led him to see things as they were, and give them the remedy they needed ; he respected right wherever he recognized it ; but when he saw an evil lurking behind an established right, he straightway attacked it."<sup>\*</sup>

And all the men who were not of noble birth, and who had often to suffer, more or less, from the arbitrary rule of the lords, rejoiced to see the authority of the Crown become greater, for they hoped to find in the monarch a protector against their oppressors. But French historians remark that, for one hundred and fifty years after the death of St. Louis, the progress of the royal power did nothing for the good and happiness of the people. They point out also that, although St. Louis did not consider himself an *absolute* monarch, yet there was no precise limit to his power, and no precise limit was ever set to the power of the king in France. Therefore, in time to come, when the power of the nobles had been gradually lessened and destroyed, it became very easy for the kings to slide downwards into despotism ; and this was what they actually did, much to the injury of the commonwealth.

With respect to the parliament, it remains to be said that all the great barons found it necessary to admit men learned in the law into their feudal courts, in consequence of the alterations which were gradually introduced into the law ; and that, by degrees, the Roman law took the place of the feudal customs in every part of France. Like the barons and knights in the Parliament of Paris, too, the lords everywhere soon left the management of legal business to the lawyers. And as all the great fiefs in process of time became incorporated with the royal domain, a parliament, like that of Paris, was established in each of them.

It will be seen from this account of the French parliaments, that they were courts of justice, not political or legislative assemblies. There was no popular election of

\* Guizot, quoted in Rev. J. H. Gurney's *Life of St. Louis*.



members, nor any open, public discussion of matters pertaining to the national weal. Yet in later ages, the parliaments, especially that of Paris, will be found acting a prominent part in the political events of the time.\*

\* This account of the French parliaments is chiefly taken, in substance, from Sir Jas. Stephen's "Lectures on the History of France."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Philip *the Hardy*.—Sicilian Vespers.—Philip invades Aragon: His Death.—Philip the Fair: His unscrupulous Aggressions at home and abroad.—War in Flanders; and its Results.—Contest with Pope Boniface VIII.—Destruction of the Knights Templars.—Philip's Conduct to the Commons.—Transference of the Papal Court to France.

FROM 1270 A.D. TO 1314.

LOUIS IX. was succeeded by his son Philip III., surnamed *the Hardy*, but why, history does not inform us; and few sovereigns in the annals of France have given less proof of hardihood, or of any manly quality. He passed his life chiefly amidst favourites and servants of low degree, devoted to superstitious observances which were not accompanied with any attractive examples of mercy or piety. The chief incident which distinguishes his reign is the terrible massacre which overthrew the French rule in Sicily. The tyranny of Charles had provoked the resentment of the islanders, and the excesses of his troops, and especially the outrages to which they subjected the Sicilian women, had increased the national indignation to the highest point. Pedro III., king of Aragon, who had married the daughter of that Manfred whom Charles had dispossessed, claimed the kingdom of Sicily in right of his wife, and threatened to wrest it from the French. The people gladly concerted a rising with him, and were impatiently waiting the signal for a general revolt, when an insult offered by a French soldier to a young girl of Palermo, proved a spark to fire the train. The citizens rose in fury, and the vesper bell which rung out on Easter Monday, 1282, became a summons to the work of slaughter. In less than two hours

a general massacre had taken place of all the French, whatever their age, sex, or condition. The example of the capital was eagerly followed by the other towns in the island ; so that in the space of a few weeks, Sicily was entirely rid of its French invaders. In this massacre (which is known as *the Sicilian vespers*), priests slew each other at the altar, fathers killed their daughters who had married French husbands, and every horror took place which could be practised by a nation taking vengeance, as one man, on its oppressors.

A war ensued, in which Charles was supported by the kings of France and Castile. But his fleet was destroyed by that of Don Pedro, and his son taken prisoner ; and six months afterwards, Charles, mortified and disappointed, sunk into the grave. His nephew, King Philip, had been bribed to support his cause, by the offer of the kingdom of Aragon ; the Pope (a Frenchman), Martin IV., declaring that Pedro was deposed. Philip accordingly conveyed the throne which Pope Martin had assigned to him to his younger son, and marched with a fine army to put him in possession. But sickness broke out amongst his troops. Philip himself was seized, and was fain to make a precipitate retreat into his own kingdom. Carried in a litter, and followed by the disheartened remnant of his forces, he just reached Perpignan, and died October, 1285.

Alphonso, count of Poitiers and Toulouse, having died without children, all his territory reverted to the Crown in this reign ; the royal domain was therefore augmented by the accession of Poitiers, Auvergne, Toulouse, and several other lesser fiefs.

Philip IV., surnamed the Fair, succeeded his father at the age of sixteen ; and it is a proof of the advance which the monarchical spirit had already made in France, that the great feudatories of the kingdom took no advantage of his youth to raise themselves to power. The war with Aragon lingered on for seven years with no decisive action. It was terminated, at last, by a treaty securing Sicily to the house of Aragon, and Naples to

Charles the lame, the son of the deceased King Charles of Anjou. Charles the lame gave up his French domains, Anjou and Maine, to his cousin Charles of Valois, second son of Philip the Hardy.

Philip the Fair proved a king of most unscrupulous character, intent upon his own aggrandizement, which he pursued by odious means. Certain men belonging to that class of lawyers and counsellors who had recently risen to importance, proved his servile and efficient tools in the work of extortion, and furnished him with pretexts, which had a show of legal justice, for encroaching in every way on the rights of all other orders in the state. He had borrowed largely from two wealthy Italian merchants; to repay them, he arrested in one day every Italian trader and banker in his dominions, on pretended charges of usury, and forced the unhappy men to redeem themselves from torture by the payment of heavy ransoms. His own subjects fared no better; and the magistrates, his creatures, whom he had appointed to office, justified him in all his robberies.

An accidental quarrel between a Norman and a Gascon sailor, which led to a general fight between the crews of two ships, was eagerly laid hold of by Philip as a pretext for plundering Edward I., king of England. Affecting to consider this trifling circumstance as an insult offered to the French flag, he summoned Edward, as vassal of France for Aquitaine, to appear and take his trial before his peers; foreseeing, no doubt, that so great an indignity offered to a powerful and high-spirited monarch could not but involve a contest, of which he might avail himself to seize on some portion of that fief. Edward was in truth greatly offended; but desirous of postponing all other wars till he should have accomplished the conquest of Scotland, he treated Philip with extraordinary forbearance, and sent his brother, the earl of Cornwall, to Paris with the proposal to place six of his castles in Guienne in Philip's hands, until the matter in dispute could be thoroughly sifted, as pledges that, if he should be found

in the wrong, he would make all suitable satisfaction. At the same time, he stipulated that the summons so offensive to his dignity should be withdrawn. Philip agreed to this arrangement with a solemn promise, which he immediately broke in the most faithless manner; taking possession of the six castles only as a step to the conquest of Gascony, into which province he immediately marched an army. He even sent a fleet to burn Dover and attack the English coast. Edward, however, still intent on his Scottish projects, deferred the prosecution of his quarrel with France; merely sending a small army into Aquitaine to check Philip's aggressions. But in 1297, Scotland appearing to be effectually quieted, he led an army into Flanders, and formed a confederacy with several German and Flemish princes for a combined invasion of France. Formidable as this confederation seemed, no decisive action resulted from it; and Philip, by intrigues, and the distribution of large sums amongst the German princes, contrived to break it up. Against the earl of Flanders, he stirred up the inhabitants of the large towns, who were already inclined to insurrection, and but for the assistance of Edward, that unfortunate prince would have been ruined.

Pope Boniface VIII. now proposed to mediate between England and France, and succeeded in negotiating a long truce, which was further cemented by a double engagement of marriage; Edward taking for his second wife Philip's sister Margaret, and his son, the Prince of Wales, being promised to Isabella, Philip's daughter, then only in her fourth year. Having secured peace with Edward, Philip now with flattering promises cajoled the aged earl of Flanders to place himself in his power. The unhappy earl was straightway imprisoned, and all his states seized by Philip, who gave the Flemings the count de Châtillon for a governor, and overawed the cities by pouring in bodies of French troops. The French knights and gentry who had accompanied Châtillon, with their usual haughtiness, despised and despoiled the Flemish

burghers; treating all their municipal and civic privileges and rights as things of no account; and the French soldiery being permitted intolerable licence, the patience of the people was worn out. The guilds of the various towns assembled, massacred some of the intruders, and chased out the rest. The next year (1302) these citizen soldiers had met in force at Courtray, when the French army came and encamped in face of them. All the flower of the French chivalry was there; but the undaunted burghers heard mass, received the communion together, and then made ready for battle, expecting no quarter, but choosing death rather than bondage.

Ralph de Nesle at the head of the French horsemen proposed to turn the flank of the Flemings, and attack them both in front and rear; but the king's cousin, Robert of Artois, too impatient for any manœuvring, asked him fiercely if he was afraid of the enemy. "Sir," said de Nesle, indignantly, "if you follow where I shall go, you will come very far forward." So saying, he spurred furiously to the attack, followed by all his cavalry. The whole array of knights and lords dashed on in like manner, each one striving to be foremost, and disdaining the burgher forces too much to think any precautions necessary to insure their overthrow. But the latter had dug a deep trench in front of their line, and into this the headlong array of knights and horsemen tumbled pell-mell one upon another. The Flemings had but to beat them down with their heavy iron clubs and mallets; every blow told terribly on the struggling entangled mass. The duke of Burgundy and a few more, seeing the peril of their companions, fled from the field and escaped, but two hundred nobles of the highest birth perished, with several thousand men-at-arms.

Philip made immense efforts to repair this disgrace. He forced the gentry and rich traders to send their gold and silver plate to his mint, paying them for it in debased coin. He sold liberty to many serfs, and patents of nobility to many commoners. All commoners who had as much as



twenty-five livres a year were obliged to serve as soldiers or find substitutes, and all men of estate to find soldiers in proportion to the number of their serfs. By these means he raised 70,000 men, with whom he beat the Flemings with great slaughter at Mons; but when he thought them quite crushed by this calamity, he saw a new Flemish force of 60,000 men advancing to meet him under the walls of Lille. "Does it rain Flemings!" exclaimed the king. He thought peace more prudent than prolonged warfare with so indomitable a people, and concluded a treaty; the Flemings agreeing to yield to him *Walloon*\* Flanders as far as the river Lys, with the towns of Lille and Douai; and Philip recognizing their independence, and restoring the son of the late imprisoned count to liberty.

During the contest with the Flemings, Philip had been engaged in a dispute with the Pope, which was carried on with great violence on both sides. Philip had levied contributions on the clergy for purposes of state, and Boniface had published a bull denouncing all such exactions as worthy of excommunication. This was the beginning of the quarrel; but many other subjects of dispute arose to inflame the hostility of both parties, until the king convoked all the barons of France at the Louvre, and caused William de Nogaret, a lawyer devoted to his service, to accuse the Pope before them of heresy and other crimes. The barons, incensed at the pretensions of Boniface, who had arrogated to himself the highest degree of authority ever claimed by his predecessors, unanimously pronounced against him, and Nogaret undertook to give these proceedings effect by seizing the Pope's person. Accompanied by Colonna, a banished Roman nobleman who had a personal quarrel with Boniface, and by six hundred soldiers, he went to Anagni, where the Pope usually resided. All his

\* That is, the portion of Flanders where the Walloon tongue was spoken; the dialect of mingled Latin and Gaulish, anciently spoken in northern Gaul.

attendants fled in terror when the armed band entered the palace, shouting, "Success to the king of France ! Death to Pope Boniface !" Boniface, who was eighty-six years old, prepared, as he said, "at least to die like a pope." He arrayed himself in his robes, placed the crown on his head, and seated himself in his pontifical chair, holding in his hand the keys of St. Peter. The composure and dignity of the old man imposed some restraint on his captors ; but although no weapon was raised against him, the affront had inflicted a mortal wound on his spirit. The people of Anagni on the third day took courage, and expelled the French. Boniface, restored to liberty, hastened to Rome, burning to avenge himself. But the violence of his passion overpowered his reason, and his death immediately followed (Oct., 1303).

After the death of Boniface VIII., the French interest soon gained ascendancy in the College of Cardinals. In 1305, the archbishop of Bordeaux, a Frenchman, was elected pope ; Philip, it was said, having promised him that he would secure his election on condition of receiving certain services, one of which, for the present, must remain secret. To these conditions the new pope, who took the name of Clement V., assented ; and in due time it appeared that the secret service required was the suppression of the Knights Templars. The Templars possessed many establishments and great estates in France, as well as in other countries. Their power excited the king's jealousy, their wealth stimulated his covetousness ; and they were not, in general, held in much favour, for the severe morality, and the zeal for the defence of Palestine, which had distinguished the founders of the order, had long ceased to characterize their successors.

In one day, and while they suspected nothing, Philip caused every Templar in France to be arrested, and closely confined, on charges of crime and blasphemy so astounding and so infamous, that it is not credible the

whole body of knights could be justly accused. One hundred and forty were brought to trial, frightful tortures being employed to make them accuse themselves. About fifty gave way under their torments, and confessed whatever they were charged with ; many more stood firm. Fifty-four were burned at once, under sentence of an archbishop who was a creature of Philip's. Some hundreds languished in prison, or died by hunger or the sword. The crowning horror was the execution of the grand master of the order, Jacques de Molay, with two companions of noble birth and high office. They had been long imprisoned, and when stretched on the rack had confessed some of the charges brought against the order. Having afterwards retracted this confession, their judges remanded them for further examination ; but the king, brooking no delay, caused them to be brought out and burned the same evening. The peculiar barbarity of the execution (for they were consumed by a slow fire), and the constancy with which they endured their sufferings, made a deep impression on the people. De Molay with his dying breath cited Philip and the Pope to meet him, within the year, at the bar of the Omniscient Judge ; and a rumour went abroad that the innocent blood would be avenged by the speedy extinction of the king and his house.

Clement, in effect, died one month, and Philip seven months afterwards. The close of his reign was marked by the disgraceful accusation of misconduct brought against his three daughters-in-law, and the horrible punishments inflicted on their real or supposed accomplices. Under these gloomy auspices, the king ended his days (November, 1314) ; oppressed, it is said, with much terror and anguish of mind ; and exhorting his sons to practise justice, mercy, and piety ; admonitions which might have proved more effectual, had they ever been recommended by his own example.

The name of Philip *the Fair* had long been supplanted by that of Philip *the Coiner*, for he had made a practice

of adulterating the coinage, and then refusing to receive the debased coin when the people brought it in payment of the enormous taxes he levied upon them. It was not possible that the unhappy Jews, always a prey to the spoiler, could escape under such a king. Philip had encouraged them to settle in the kingdom. At the end of some years, he seized them all, threw them into prison, and stripped them of their goods.

But although Philip the Fair was the most tyrannical despot who had ever reigned over France, he was the first king who granted a share in the national councils to the *third order*, or commons of the realm, by assembling the States-general, which shall be more particularly described in a future chapter. "He showed," says a French historian, "a sort of favour to the citizens ; knowing that he needed supporters in order to carry out his cruel and perfidious policy ; and aware that these men of low degree, accustomed to be lightly esteemed, would be too proud of the royal favour to take any exception to the measures of the government. They were indeed," he adds, "strangers, for the most part, to that spirit of independence which was agitating the surrounding countries of Europe ; and to which Italy and Flanders owed their industry and their progress in the arts. The heroism with which several of the town populations had struggled for liberty, two hundred years before, had disappeared ; and all Frenchmen who were not powerful enough to defy the aggressions of the Crown lived under a yoke of iron."

The royal domain had been increased in this reign by the confiscation of the fiefs of Marche and Angoulême ; by the acquisition of Lyons and its territory, hitherto a fief of the empire of Germany ; and by a portion of Flanders. Also, by the marriage of Philip the Fair with Jane, heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, and of the earldom of Champagne and Brie, all those territories had been acquired to the royal family. Navarre preserved its independence, however, as a separate kingdom ; and on

the death of Queen Jane, her eldest son, Louis, was crowned king, he being then ten years old.

In this reign began the residence of the Popes in France, which lasted about seventy years. The Comtat Venaissin, a small territory having Carpentras for its capital, had been acquired by Pope Gregory X. from Philip III. The city of Avignon was purchased in 1348 by Pope Clement VI. of the countess of Provence, and from that time became the pontifical seat in France.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Successors of Philip the Fair.—First Application of the Salic Law to the Inheritance of the Kingdom.—Philip of Valois.—Events of the War with Edward III.: Battle of Sluys.—Jane de Montfort.—Invasion of Normandy.—Crécy.—Fall of Calais.

FROM 1314 A.D. TO 1347.

PHILIP IV. left three sons and one daughter; his sons successively occupied the throne of France, and were all princes of irregular, vicious lives; his daughter, the beautiful and wicked Isabella, "she-wolf of France," was the wife of our unhappy king Edward II.

Louis X. (surnamed *le Hutin*, an old French word signifying *turbulent* or *mutinous*) reigned only two years, surrounded by dissipated young men of rank, who shared his pleasures, and who profited by his partiality to obtain the restoration of the privileges and the power which the nobility had lost during the last reign. Louis also restored the practice of judicial combat.

Great disorder in the finances, and a terrible famine, were the disastrous marks of this reign; the latter gave birth to extraordinary and scandalous outbreaks of fanaticism; large companies of people, divested of all clothing, as a mark of penitence, marching in procession with the priests at their head, to implore a favourable season for the crops. Louis died in 1316, leaving one daughter. His widow gave birth to a son shortly after his death, but the infant lived only eight days; and Philip, brother of the late king, who had already possessed himself of the royal authority, caused the States-General and the University of Paris to declare that the Salic law, anciently in force among the Franks with respect to



private lands, should be applied to the French crown, and that in virtue of it no female could ever inherit the throne of the kingdom. This was the first application of this celebrated law to the inheritance of the crown of France.

The new king, Philip V., felt that his claim needed all the support which the men of law could afford it, and bestowed upon them special favour. He gave some attention to the internal order of the kingdom, appointed captains-general in his provinces, and captains of cities, under whose command he placed the militia of the towns; providing, however, that the arms of the men should remain in custody of the captains, until they were called into action.

A new religious madness seized the peasantry in this reign. They assembled by thousands to go to Jerusalem; and began by burning alive all the Jews they could lay hold of, as an acceptable offering to the Almighty. Proceeding to many other excesses of murder and robbery, they were at length exterminated by the king's troops. The unhappy lepers, who were at this period very numerous in France, fared no better than the Jews. Either out of malice, or blind folly, they were charged with sorcery, and with having poisoned all the waters in the country. The king and the Pope (John XXII.) both believed the charge of sorcery, though no proof of it was found against the poor creatures, excepting the confessions wrung from them by torture; and the lepers perished horribly. In the midst of these atrocious executions, the king fell ill and died, 1322. At the time he caused the States-general to decree the exclusion of females from the succession to the crown, he was the father of a son who had since died. He left several daughters, but the throne passed to his brother, Charles IV., who reigned five years, and died like his two predecessors in the prime of his age, leaving no son (1327). His reign was distinguished by no memorable event. With that of his successor, Philip of Valois, we enter on a long period of disastrous wars between France and England.

Notwithstanding the application of the Salic law, which the States had made by desire of Philip V., the late king had considered the question as by no means settled, and had enjoined, shortly before his death, that the twelve peers and the chief barons of the kingdom sitting in parliament with the counsellors, should finally decide who was the rightful inheritor of the kingdom. There were three principal claimants: Philip, son of Charles of Valois, the brother of Philip III.; Louis of Evreux, the son of another brother of the same King Philip; and Edward III. of England, the son of Isabella, sister of the last three kings who had occupied the throne.

The Parliament decided in favour of Philip of Valois, who took the name of Philip VI. But as it was notorious that the lawyers who dictated the decision were entirely under the influence of Philip, Edward refused to accept the sentence of the Parliament; alleging that, while a reason for excluding women from inheriting the kingdom might be found in the feebleness of the sex, no such reason could be applied to their male descendants. Philip, on the other hand, argued that the reason of their exclusion was chiefly that of protecting the kingdom from falling under the dominion of a foreign sovereign.

But the dispute was to be decided by other weapons than arguments. In the mean time, Louis of Evreux, the third claimant, who had married Jane, daughter of Louis X., claimed in her right the kingdom of Navarre, which had been the heritage of her grandmother; and was put in possession of it.

Edward, who was still very young (in his seventeenth year), and kept in much thralldom by his mother and her favourite, Mortimer, was compelled, sorely against his will, to do homage to his successful rival for the provinces which he held in France (June, 1329): and the Scottish war in which he was engaged during some subsequent years prevented him from taking any steps against Philip.

Meanwhile, the French sovereign had given considerable succours to the Scots, and Edward, in retaliation, had formed a confederacy with several princes of the Netherlands and Germany, and with the great cities of Flanders. The king of France was the main stay of the feudal nobility of Flanders, and had signalized the opening of his reign by an expedition in aid of the earl of that country, which had caused the slaughter of many thousands of the burgher forces, at the defeat of Cassel (1328). To Edward the cities looked as a counterpoise to the power of their dangerous neighbour. Their leader at this time was the famous Von Artaveldt, a brewer of Ghent, who had long possessed more real power than the earl who was nominally the governor of the country ; and "to speak properly," says the chronicler, "there never was in Flanders, nor in none other country, prince, duke, nor other, that ruled a country so peaceably and so long as Von Artaveldt." He received Edward's ambassadors with the warmest welcome, and agreed to admit the king into Flanders, which opened the entrance for him into France.

But it was difficult to bring the confederate princes to any united action ; and the first two years passed by without any important operations. In the third year, 1340, the English fleet surprised that of the French off Sluys, on the 22nd June, and completely defeated it. Though fought on the sea, this could hardly be called a naval battle, for little depended on the accidents of the winds and waves, or on the skill of a commander in availing himself of them. Piles of stones on the deck formed a part of the magazines. The archers of both nations used their cross-bows as if they had been on land. They employed grappling-irons for boarding, and came to such close quarters as to exhibit a succession of single combats. But the victory was complete. The French lost eighty ships, and more than thirty thousand men. The moral result was yet more fatal to them ; they lost courage to encounter the English at sea, and the

passage of the Straits lay free to the latter for several centuries.

An armistice followed this battle ; Edward having first vainly endeavoured to decide his quarrel with Philip by single combat. Philip eluded the proposal, by declining to receive a challenge addressed to him as the *Count of Valois*, and not as the king of France. Edward had himself assumed the latter title, at the solicitation of his Flemish allies, as a pledge of inflexible steadiness in his undertaking.

But scarcely a year had elapsed, when a disputed succession in the duchy of Brittany gave rise to fresh hostilities. The last duke had died without children ; the duchy was claimed by John de Montfort, his half-brother, and by Charles of Blois, who had married his niece. The peers of France, influenced by Philip, adjudged the inheritance to Charles, who was Philip's own nephew ; and a French army put him in possession of the capital. The king of England espoused the cause of John. John's best defender was, however, his wife " Jane, a princess of Flanders, who sustained the fortunes of her husband with the courage of a man and the heart of a lion." Montfort was betrayed by a band of malcontent lords into the hands of his competitor ; but the heroic countess sought succour from England, exhibited her infant son to the people to confirm their attachment to the male line of their princes, and by her eloquence and beauty made a deep impression on the multitude, whose first movements are seldom ungenerous.

After a gallant defence, she was on the eve of surrendering the castle of Hennebon, when, mounting its highest turret for the last chance of a view of her deliverers, and descriing a squadron in the horizon, she called out, " The English ! I see the English ! " The relieving force under Sir Walter Manny quickly landed, set fire to the formidable machines which the besiegers had set up for a final assault, and entered the town. " Whoever, then," adds Froissart, " saw the countess come

down from the castle, and kiss Sir Walter Manny and his companions, one after the other, two or three times, might well say that she was a valiant lady."

A truce was concluded for near four years, of which one of the stipulations was the release of Montfort. That condition was, however, evaded by Philip; and it was not till three years after, that Montfort escaped from his prison in the Louvre, and flying to England, did homage to Edward, as king of France. He soon afterwards died in his well-defended fortress of Hennebon. An odious instance of perfidy on the part of the French king added fresh fuel to the flame of war. Trusting to the truce, the Breton knights of both parties attended a tournament. Philip caused twelve of them, friends of Montfort, to be arrested, and beheaded without trial. The kinsmen of the murdered knights appealed to Edward for redress. Godfrey of Harcourt, in particular, fled to England, and employed his address and eloquence, both of which he possessed in perfection, to induce the king to attack Normandy, the great and wealthy towns of which province were undefended by adequate fortifications; while the lords of the province were engaged with Philip's son, John, in making an incursion into Edward's own domain of Gascony.

The confederates of Edward in Germany and the Netherlands had proved, with the exception of the Flemish burghers, mere mercenary and nominal allies; deserting England as soon as her subsidies were exhausted, to make peace with France. But with a greater army than he had yet collected in England, the king disembarked near Cape La Hogue, in the end of July, 1346. He speedily reduced Caen, and Lower Normandy on the south of the Seine; marched along the left bank of the river towards Paris, burnt St. Germain's and St. Cloud, and alarmed the inhabitants of the capital. Philip, who had fixed his head-quarters at St. Denis, broke down all the bridges to prevent Edward from joining the 60,000 Flemings who had already crossed the frontier. The



French king had gathered a very great army ; all the force of his kingdom being joined with those of his allies, the earls of Savoy, Flanders, Hainault, and several other princes, amongst whom was a brave blind old knight, John of Luxembourg, king of Bohemia.

But a feint march of the English so deceived the French, that Edward was able to take possession of the remains of the bridge of Poissy, and repair it sufficiently for the passage of his army. He pursued his course with all speed towards Flanders, closely followed by Philip. But every bridge had been demolished on the deep river Somme, which appeared impassable at all points ; the best troops of Artois and Picardy being drawn up on the opposite bank, to prevent the enemy from essaying to ford it. Despite the danger and difficulty of the operation, Edward crossed at midnight the ford at Blanchetaque, which was passable at low water ; engaged the troops appointed to defend it in the midst of the river, and routed them ; and took possession of the village of Crotoi, on the sea-coast, where he allowed his men a day's rest and refreshment.

Philip likewise halted the same day at Abbeville, to receive additional reinforcements, which increased his army to about 115,000 men. The English troops were about 35,000. Confident in his enormous superiority of numbers, the king of France marched forward the next day, as he believed to victory ; his troops hurrying on with reckless speed, and loud cries of "Attack, take, and slay !" before they were even in sight of the enemy. Edward had chosen his ground at Crécy, and posted his small army with masterly skill. "This ground," he said, "is mine. This county of Ponthieu was the just heritage of my mother. I now challenge it as my own ; and may God defend the right !" The battle, famous in the annals of both countries, took place on the 26th August, 1346. The first flight of the English arrows discomfited the fifteen thousand Genoese bowmen who formed the vanguard of the French army. Philip, enraged at their



retreat, ordered them to be slain, a ferociously absurd order, which was carried into effect by the heavy-armed troops in their rear, and occasioned immense confusion, which no subsequent movements could rectify. After a few hours' furious fighting, the army of France was utterly routed, with the loss of 1,200 knights, 1,500 gentlemen, 4,000 men-at-arms, and 30,000 infantry; besides Charles of Alençon, the king's brother, the duke of Lorraine, and the kings of Majorca and Bohemia. So great was the panic, that only sixty soldiers remained to guard the person of their sovereign as he fled from the fatal field. With these he reached, after nightfall, the castle of Broye. "Open," said he, striking on the door; "it is the fortune of France."

In three days after the battle Edward turned his arms to the siege of Calais; anxious to hold a key of France by a safer tenure than the good-will of the Flemish townsmen, who, the year before, had suddenly revolted against their leader, Artaveldt, and massacred him. The governor and people of Calais made a noble defence of their city during eleven months. After having devoured all the unclean animals in the fortress, they seemed to have no resource left but that of devouring one another.\*

Philip, who had raised another army, endeavoured to relieve the place in the summer of 1347, but found it impossible, the English having fortified the approaches. From their towers the men of Calais saw his host advance and retire again; and, perceiving that all hope of succour was at an end, they offered to capitulate. Edward answered, "Let six of the chief burgesses come forth, bare-headed, bare-footed, and bare-legged, in their shirts, with halters about their necks, with the keys of the town

\* At an early period of the siege, the governor, fearing to be starved into a surrender, sent away seventeen hundred of the poorer inhabitants, that the stock of provisions might last the longer. Edward, moved with pity at the sight of these needy people deprived of their homes, caused them all to be well fed, and presented with a small sum of money to help them on their way.

and castle in their hands. These must yield themselves to my will : the residue I take to my mercy." When this stipulation was made known in the city, there was great weeping and lamentation. But the richest of the citizens, Eustace de St. Pierre, said, "A very piteous and evil thing it would be to suffer all this people to die. I have so great hope to find grace of our Lord, if I die to save this people, that I will willingly yield myself up to the king of England." When Eustace had thus spoken, another citizen, Jean d'Aire, said "he would keep company with his gossip, Sir Eustace." Then the two brothers Wissant, and two more whose names history has not preserved, followed the same noble example. These six, each having a halter round his neck, bore the keys of the city to the English camp (August 4th, 1347).

Edward received them sternly, for he hated the people of Calais, who had so long delayed his progress. He threatened instant execution, but, at the intercession of Queen Philippa, freely forgave them. St. Pierre and some others of the inhabitants continued citizens of Calais still, though under allegiance now to another king; the remainder of the inhabitants quitted the town, which became an English colony.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Visitation of the *Black Death*.—Taxes imposed by Philip of Valois : The *Gabelle*.—Re-marriage, and Death of Philip : his Acquisitions of Territory.—Character and Government of John.—Battle of Poitiers, Sept., 1356.—Captivity of the King.—*La Jacquerie*, or Revolt of the Peasants.—The States-general ; their Composition and Proceedings.—Faithlessness of the Crown.—First Convention of the States, 1301.—States-general of John's Reign.—Rise of the Commons.—Charles the Bad.—Stephen Marcel.—Edict of Reformation : Murder of obnoxious Ministers.—The Dauphin makes War on Paris : Assassination of Marcel : Subjugation of the City.

FROM 1348 A.D. TO 1358.

THE first-fruit of the reduction of Calais was a truce, which lasted till 1355. Five years before that time Philip of Valois ended his days. The close of his reign was marked by the appalling visitation of the *black death*, which was supposed to have carried off one-third of the population of the kingdom. In Paris, five (some say *eight*) hundred persons died in a day. The populace, in their misery and terror, turned upon the unhappy Jews, whom they accused (as thirty years before they had accused the lepers) of poisoning the rivers and wells ; and these unfortunate people, who were alternately expelled the kingdom and recalled to it, were burned and massacred by thousands, both in France and Germany.

Notwithstanding the disasters of the war, Philip had abated nothing of the pomp and magnificence with which he loved to surround himself. To maintain the luxury and splendour of his court, he imposed heavy burdens on the people, especially the *Gabelle*, or salt duty, which gave the king a monopoly of the salt produced in the kingdom ; and, in most of the provinces of France, obliged every

head of a household to purchase at the royal storehouses, at an exorbitant price, a certain quantity of salt which was fixed by law, and which represented the *supposed* consumption of his family. This tax soon became, and continued for centuries, one of the most vexatious grievances which oppressed the humbler classes of the people.

In January, 1350, Philip took for his wife the beautiful Blanche of Navarre, a young princess of eighteen, who was to have married his son; and died in August of the same year, at the age of fifty-eight.

He had purchased the lordship of Montpellier from the last king of Majorca, and had likewise acquired the province of Dauphiné, its last prince, Humbert II., having no heirs. Dauphiné became the portion of the eldest sons of the French kings, who henceforward were entitled *Dauphins*, a name originally given to the lords of the province on account of the dolphin (in French, *dauphin*), which formed their crest.

Philip of Valois was succeeded by his son John. John, who was upwards of thirty years old when he ascended the throne, is represented by French historians as at once impetuous and irresolute, as rash as he was brave, lavish and revengeful, perfectly acquainted with the rules of chivalry, and ignorant of the duties of a king; sacrificing to his notions of *honour* the rights of his subjects and the interests of the state. France was in a miserable condition at the time of his accession, yet he spared no cost on the festivities of his coronation; and to replenish the treasury, exhausted by the prodigious expense which had been incurred, he resorted to a variety of dishonest expedients; tampering with the coin, and confiscating to his own profit all the money due from his subjects to the Lombard merchants settled in the kingdom. As the commerce of France was principally carried on by these foreigners, the dishonest conduct of the king inflicted a great injury on the trade of his own kingdom, for the Lombards left the country.

In 1353, King Edward made offers of peace to John, on condition that the French king should formally cede to him Guienne and Calais. John refused; and on the expiration of the truce, two years afterwards, the Prince of Wales, who governed Guienne as his father's viceroy, recommenced hostilities by a predatory expedition into Languedoc. In the following year he carried his arms into the heart of the kingdom, and was on his return to Bordeaux, when King John, with an army of 60,000 men, overtook him near Poitiers, September 17th, 1356. The prince had but 8,000 men, and John believed himself certain of victory. The whole of the 18th, which was a Sunday, was taken up with the fruitless endeavours of the Cardinal Talleyrand to avoid bloodshed, by bringing the king and the prince to terms. The latter offered to give up all the places and persons he had taken in the campaign, and to engage not to bear arms against France for the next seven years. John insisted that he should surrender himself and a hundred of his knights prisoners. But the prince would hear of no such condition. The spot on which the armies met consisted of two ridges of rising ground, parted by a hollow. The English were posted on the highest ridge, leading up to which from the hollow was a narrow lane shut in by hedges. The French army was arranged on the opposite side of the hollow in three great divisions, of which that commanded by the king was the hindmost, his three elder sons commanded the centre, his brother, the duke of Orleans, led the van. The battle began on the morning of the 19th, the French charging with their usual impetuous ardour up the lane; but the English archers, who were stationed behind the hedges on each side, let fly their showers of arrows, and in a few minutes the lane was choked with the dead. The check proved fatal to the French army; and when the prince charged in his turn, a general panic seized the first and second divisions; they fled in confusion, the elder sons of the king, with more than eight hundred men who had not even approached the enemy, being among the

first to escape from the field. The king's division stood firm, and his youngest son, Philip, a boy of fourteen, fought valiantly by his father's side.

But although greatly superior in numbers still to the English, they were entirely defeated after a short but desperate struggle. John, his son Philip, and a great number of knights were taken prisoners, and a very great number fell on the field.

The prince received the captive monarch with a courtesy and hospitality which have justly placed him among the most generous of victorious knights. He served the king at his repast, and declined a seat by him at table as too exalted an honour. He endeavoured to console him for his defeat as an accidental disaster, more than compensated by the honour due to the prowess he had that day displayed, and assured him that his misfortune would only lead to a friendship between two monarchs, of whom the vanquished was as worthy of admiration as the victor. The subsequent reception of John by King Edward fully bore out the assurances of the prince.

A truce of two years followed the defeat at Poitiers ; but it afforded little relief to France. The bands of mercenary troops who had been enlisted for the war were now let loose upon the country. Many thousands of this soldiery, divided into little companies of thirty or forty each, commanded by adventurers of all nations, ravaged every part of the kingdom, making war without distinction on all who had anything to lose.

It might be thought that the public distress could scarcely be much augmented, yet it was very considerably deepened by civil war, and by the terrible revolt of the peasants (known in history as *La Jacquerie*), both of which broke out in the year 1358.

The insurrection of the peasantry was provoked by their intolerable misery. Pillaged by the soldiery, despised as mere labourers and serfs by the citizens of the towns, and crushed by the oppressive exactions of their lords, these unhappy people had no protector. The



proverbial saying common amongst the French gentry in those days, sufficiently describes the friendless condition of the serf. The whole class were commonly designated as Jacques Bonhomme, and their lords were used to say: "Jacques Bonhomme ne lâche pas son argent s'il n'est roué de coups; mais Jacques Bonhomme payera, car il sera battu." ("Goodman Jacques will not let go his money without he is soundly cudgelled; but Goodman Jacques will pay, for he shall be beaten.") Their wretchedness was greatly increased at this time by the exaction of money to pay the ransom of the lords and knights made prisoners at the battle of Poitiers, and a common feeling of despair seemed to take possession of them all. In most of the provinces round Paris they rose up as one man; a "revolt of slaves, who having lost all hope might well say, 'Farewell, fear; farewell, remorse!'" and which was accompanied with horrors and outrages which it is impossible to imagine, and from which neither the helplessness of age nor the innocence of infancy afforded any exemption.

The nobility, disunited before, now joined together for mutual defence, and stifled the rebellion in the blood of the revolvers, who, though immensely superior in numbers, could oppose little defence to antagonists so fully armed as to be almost invulnerable. So utterly were they exterminated, that great tracts of country lay waste a long while for want of hands to till them; dearth followed, and brought pestilence in its train: the cup of national suffering seemed full even to overflowing.

The civil war arose out of some proceedings in the States-general, of which we will here give a brief account, prefacing it with a few words concerning the States themselves. The States-general, convened for the first time by Philip the Fair, consisted of three orders,—the Nobility, the Clergy, and the *Third Estate* or Commons; each of whom chose deputies to represent their order in the assembly, and intrusted to them a catalogue of the

grievances which they desired to have redressed by royal authority. Besides the deputies, the princes of the blood royal, the twelve peers of France, the knights of the different orders of chivalry, and the chief feudal officers of the Crown, had seats in the States-general in virtue of their rank or their offices ; but they sat there, rather as spectators or ornaments of that splendid pageant, than for the purpose of taking part in the business of the assembly. The distinction of rank observed between the first two orders and the third was very great. The deputies of the clergy and nobles sat covered in the assembly, those of the commons bareheaded ; the speakers of the first two orders addressed the king standing, the speaker of the commons on his knees. When the deputies of the three States had assembled at the time and place appointed, the king came, accompanied by a brilliant train of princes and dignitaries, and took his seat on a throne prepared for him. Then his chancellor made a speech, explaining the reasons why the States had been summoned to meet, and desired them to provide money for the supply of the royal treasury. To this address the speaker of each order made a suitable reply. The chancellor then directed them to prepare a statement of the grievances of which they sought the redress, to be laid before the king.

After these preliminary ceremonies, the deputies of the three States separated, to discuss all the wrongs and wants of which their constituents complained, and to draw up such a catalogue of them as could be presented to the sovereign. This usually occupied some weeks, for the deputies generally took care to point out not only the evils complained of, but the way in which they thought the king could remedy them. This being done, and the catalogue or memorial of each order delivered to the king, the business of the States was at an end. In general, the sovereign came to the assembly to pronounce them dissolved, and dismissed them with a promise that he would consider and grant their requests. But it is not

too much to say that this promise was seldom, or *never*, honestly fulfilled.

Sometimes the king took no notice of them whatever ; and at each successive meeting of the States, the first complaint made by each order was, that the king had disregarded the petitions of the preceding assembly ; inso-much that, the catalogue or statement presented by the deputies being called by the name of *Cahier*, the saying, "*as ineffectual as a cahier*," became a common proverb in France.

One principal reason why the States exercised so little influence in the government of the nation, was the disunion which existed between the three orders ; the nobility and the clergy seldom agreed cordially with one another, and both the noble and clerical deputies regarded those of the commons with a mixture of jealousy and disdain.

The first occasion on which the States were convened was, however, one of much national interest. To provide for the expenses of the Flemish war, Philip the Fair had imposed a tax on all his subjects, not excepting the clergy. The Pope, Boniface VIII., forbade the clergy to pay it. Philip retaliated by an order forbidding them to pay the customary papal dues to Boniface himself. He also caused the Pope's legate, a bishop who had insulted him, to be arrested on a charge of treason. Boniface, denying that the king had any power to lay hands on the person of a bishop, ordered that the prisoner should be immediately set at liberty ; and published a bull, addressed to the king, in which he claimed extraordinary powers of domination "over nations and kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, &c. &c. ;" and charging Philip with many violations of the privileges of the Church, he informed him that he had summoned all the superior clergy of France to meet at Rome, in order to consider how such abuses could be remedied.

Philip, in great indignation, summoned an assembly of barons, bishops, and deputies from the towns, informed them of the contents of the bull, and caused it to be

burned in their presence. The nobles pledged themselves to support the king; the commons implored him to maintain his sovereign rights inviolate, and to proclaim to all the world that Pope Boniface had sinned greatly in claiming superiority over him; the bishops, after a long delay, and with some reluctance, expressed their agreement with the nobles; and Philip, strong in the support of his subjects, positively forbade the clergy to obey the Pope's summons to Rome. This first assembly of the States-general took place in April, 1301. Thirteen years later, he summoned them in order to obtain supplies of money.

It was considered that the king could not lawfully impose any new and extraordinary tax without the consent of the States. But Philip de Valois set this principle at nought, by collecting deputies from a few towns only, together with certain lords and prelates pledged to obey his will, instead of summoning a true and lawful assembly. He met, however, with no resistance; it was not until the reign of King John that the States really obtained any authority. That they did so then, was mainly owing to the new tone of independence and courage adopted by the commons, by which word we must chiefly understand the citizens of the towns. Until the reign of John, this class of men had not evinced much national feeling or public spirit,—the political interests of France seemed scarcely to touch them. Their own town or city was the only *country* which they recognized;\* they left all care for the state to the king and his great vassals; and employed all their energy in resisting the tyrannical oppression of their respective lords, not in opposing the royal power, which had sometimes interposed for their protection.

But the Crown had become the oppressor now; and

\* The noble Eustace de St. Pierre is an instance in point. He had devoted himself for his city, not for France or its king; and when Calais became an English colony, St. Pierre abode there still, as did some of his fellow-burgesses.

the citizens, bent on lightening the heavy yoke it had imposed, seized the moment when the monarchy was tottering beneath its misdeeds and its reverses, and united against it with the nobles and the clergy. But the union was short-lived. The first two orders soon became alarmed at the new authority which the States were obtaining: they perceived that the interests of the commons, which tended to social equality, were contrary to their own exclusive privileges. Although opposed to the Crown on other points, they united with it against the commons; and the transient importance of the citizen-deputies ended in reverses and disasters which served to establish more firmly the despotism of the sovereign.

The first assembly of the States-general under King John (which, however, only comprised the deputies of the "*Langue d'oïl*," or northern provinces of France) was convened in 1355, at the time when the truce with England was about to expire, and when the kingdom was threatened with additional disturbance by the hostility of Charles, commonly known as *the Bad*, king of Navarre, and lord of Evreux in Normandy; the son of that count of Evreux who had laid claim to the crown at the same time with Philip of Valois. He had married John's daughter, and John had not only defrauded him of his wife's dowry, but had lavished wealth and distinction on the Spaniard La Cerda, an enemy of the king of Navarre. Charles murdered La Cerda, and gathering round him all his vassals of Navarre and Normandy, set the king at defiance.

The States met in December, and engaged to maintain an army of 30,000 men for one year, on condition that commissioners chosen by themselves should superintend the levying of the money necessary for that purpose, and see that it was faithfully appropriated; and also that the States should be assembled again twice in the ensuing year, to examine the accounts, and take any further steps that might be necessary. Besides this, they required that several grievances which pressed hardly upon the



people should be abolished ; and, especially, that the king should cease to alter the value of the current coins at his pleasure (for within a few months, the value of the mark of gold had been raised from four livres to eighteen, and had fallen back again to four). Stephen Marcel, provost of the trades of Paris, was the speaker of the third order, and the most prominent person in this assembly. Chiefly through his endeavours, it was settled that the nobles, clergy, and commons should all sit and deliberate together on this occasion. King John, seeing that they were united, consented to everything that was required of him. But he gave them only three days in which to devise means for replenishing the treasury of the State, and providing for the defence of the kingdom ; and the measures which they took in haste were far from wise. They raised the *Gabelle*, or salt-tax, and they imposed a tax of eight deniers\* in the pound on the sale of all merchandise. It was decreed also that persons of all ranks should pay these taxes, even the king and the royal family were not to be exempt.

This was only fair ; but in general the clergy and nobles did not pay taxes like the commons, and their pride was wounded at having to do so now. Worse than this, the increase of the salt-tax was very oppressive to the poorer classes, while the new tax imposed on the sale of all goods was so vexatious, that it partly put a stop to trade. Several towns broke out in seditious revolts ; and the people of Normandy and Picardy declared that they would not pay the taxes at all, upheld in this resolution by the king of Navarre. When the States met again at the end of three months, they were obliged to repeal these obnoxious imposts, and to substitute for them a property-tax.

The part taken by the king of Navarre had increased the hatred which John already entertained for him. The Dauphin, who was then about nineteen years old, had

\* The *denier* was the 12th part of a *sou* : 20 sous went to the pound.



invited Navarre and his friends to a grand entertainment at Rouen. John, attended by a body of soldiers, came upon them unawares in the midst of the festivities. Dragging the king of Navarre from his seat, "Traitor," he said, "thou art not worthy to sit at my son's table. I will neither eat nor drink while thou livest." The lord of Harcourt and some others were instantly arrested, hurried out of the castle, and beheaded in John's sight. But on reflection he feared to shed the blood of Navarre; he was therefore imprisoned in the Louvre, and kept in a continued agony, being disturbed even in the hours of rest with frequent announcements of instant death, of being beheaded, or of being thrown in a sack into the Seine. The friends of Navarre and Harcourt immediately joined themselves to the English, and at their solicitation Edward sent a formidable army into Normandy, while his son, the Black Prince, was ravaging Auvergne, Berri, and Touraine.

These events immediately preceded the battle of Poitiers; and when the States-general assembled for the second time in 1356, the king was a prisoner, and the Dauphin appeared amongst them to solicit aid for carrying on the war. The deputies replied by requiring that the ministers of King John should be brought to trial, the king of Navarre set at liberty, and a council of regency, consisting of twelve bishops, twelve knights, and twelve citizens, appointed to assist the prince in the government of the kingdom. The Dauphin, very unwilling to have his authority lessened by a council, and displeased at the free and independent tone assumed by the States, put them off by fair words, and contrived to delay giving his answer to these demands so long, that the deputies were wearied out, and separated to their own homes. He hoped to obtain easier terms from the States of the *Langue d'oc*. They did indeed grant him some money and some troops, but they also claimed the right of managing their own finances, and various other privileges.

The aid which the young regent had obtained was far

from sufficient for his wants. The English armies were in the north and in the south ; the disbanded soldiery roaming the country, and pillaging in all quarters ; and the enemy at the gates of Paris. In this calamitous state of affairs, Stephen Marcel displayed both courage and genius. He encouraged his fellow-citizens, trained them to the use of arms, threw up fortifications round the city, and prepared for a resolute defence in case of attack. His great popularity gave him almost unlimited power over the inhabitants of Paris.

In 1357, the States again met at Paris ; and this was the most famous meeting in their history, for they constrained the regent to issue a great edict of reformation, which, if it had been carried into effect, would have wrought a revolution in the country. Amongst other provisions, the edict decreed that the States should be regularly assembled twice every year ; and that in the interval of their sessions, thirty-six commissioners, elected by themselves, should assist the sovereign in the administration of the government. That all taxes should be voted and levied by the States, who also should control the expenditure of the money. That every man in the kingdom should be taught to use arms ; but the States should pay the army ; and it should not be lawful henceforward for the lords to make war upon one another. *Purveyance* was abolished ; that is, the right of taking goods and provisions for the king's service without payment. Wherever the king went, his guards and attendants stripped the farmers of their corn and cattle, and the shopkeepers of their merchandise, on pretence that these things were required for their master's use.

These, and several other provisions, were much for the benefit of the subject, but they greatly restricted the authority of the sovereign ; and neither the captive king, nor the Dauphin, who was acting for his father, could patiently endure to lose any of their prerogatives. The prince, however, dissembled for a short time, while he secretly encouraged the jealousy which the nobles and

clergy already began to express of the ascendancy of Marcel and his fellow-citizens. Marcel and his friends, on the other hand, had few supporters out of Paris. Even the citizens of the other great towns were not yet prepared for so great a change in the institutions of the kingdom as Marcel was advocating ; and the mass of the people only looked at the taxes which the States had been obliged to impose, and murmured at having to pay anything, when they were already so much impoverished by the disasters which had befallen the country.

The States had compelled the Dauphin to dismiss several ministers whom they accused of misgovernment. He took courage now, and recalled them. It was plain that the ill-concealed enmity of the two parties would soon burst into open warfare. The Parisians armed themselves, and adapted for their distinguishing colours, blue and red. Marcel called the guilds of the various trades together, and marched to the palace. He made his way to the Dauphin's chamber, and finding with him two of the proscribed ministers, ordered the men who had followed him into the room to cut them down instantly. The Dauphin, covered with their blood, and trembling for his own life, threw himself on Marcel's mercy. "Fear nothing," said the provost; and covering the prince's head with his own cap, half-blue half-red, as a sign that he was not to be molested, he led him through the multitude of armed men to the town-hall, where he made him declare to the people that the murdered ministers were traitors who deserved their fate.

By this criminal violence, Marcel and his partisans only rendered their cause more hopeless. He was king of Paris for a short time ; but the Dauphin's seeming submission to his will only concealed a determination to be revenged on the man who had dared so to humble him. The nobles of Champagne and other provinces placed themselves at the disposal of the prince, and in a short time he was at the head of 7,000 men. He took possession of the towns and bridges on the Seine and Marne ;

destroyed the crops, and burned the granaries all round Paris, and prepared to reduce the city by famine. The citizens called on the king of Navarre, whom the States had released, to come to their aid. With his habitual faithlessness, he promised help to both parties, and betrayed both, whenever it suited his purpose. He had agreed at last to enter Paris, on the night of the 31st July, 1358, Marcel having promised him full authority, and held out to him the prospect of succession to the throne of France, if King John and his family could be deposed. But this project was not in favour with the citizens universally, and the very man in whom the provost trusted as his most familiar friend, had secretly gone over to the opposite party. He came with a small band of armed companions while Marcel and other chief men were waiting at midnight, beside the gate through which Charles of Navarre promised to enter, and cut them down on the spot. Deprived of their daring leader, the burgesses of Paris hazarded no further resistance to the Dauphin. He entered the city in triumph, and caused a great number of the principal inhabitants to be executed; the remainder were effectually overawed, and sixty years passed away before the commons dared again to attempt any reform of the government.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Treaty of Brétigny.—Liberation of the King: he returns to England: and dies, 1364.—Character of Charles V.—Du Guesclin.—End of Breton War.—Pedro *the Cruel*: War in Castile.—Captivity of Du Guesclin.—Decline of English influence in Gascony: Unpopular Government of the Black Prince.—War with England.—Death of Du Guesclin; and of Charles V., 1380.—The Great Schism.

FROM 1358 A.D. TO 1380.

IMPATIENT to return to his kingdom, John had signed a treaty at London, which surrendered half of France to England; a condition which was indignantly rejected by the States-general, whom the regent once more assembled for that purpose, 1359. But both the contending parties being weary of war, another treaty, that of Brétigny, was concluded in 1360, by which the old possessions and new conquests of the English in France were ceded to them in full sovereignty; Edward renounced his pretensions to the French crown; and John agreed to pay three millions of gold crowns for his ransom. On these conditions, John recovered his liberty, and returned to France, leaving one of his sons, the duke of Anjou, in England, as a hostage for the payment of his ransom. It did not appear that the king had learned wisdom by his misfortunes. He returned to find his kingdom in an extremity of exhaustion and distress, but the only measure which he devised for its relief was a new crusade, in which he proposed to employ the mercenary bands of soldiery who were plundering the country like hordes of banditti. The Pope, Urban V., with whom he spent six months at Avignon in much feasting and magnificence, encouraged this design, and John took the cross. But in the mean time, the son whom he had left as a hostage

in England took flight. Grieved and mortified at so glaring a breach of knightly honour, the king immediately returned to England himself, saying, "If good faith exists nowhere else in the world, it ought to be found in the heart of kings;" a noble sentiment, which would have done John more honour if his own conduct had been uniformly consistent with it.

He was received with great distinction, spent the winter in a round of banquets and diversions, and died in April, 1364, at the Savoy Palace.

Charles V. ascended the throne at the age of twenty-nine, having already governed France during several years as regent. Of a sickly constitution and phlegmatic temper, preferring study to fighting, he was not highly esteemed by his warlike nobility, and the citizens of the towns, whose aspirations to a share in the government had been crushed down by relentless executions, detested him; yet he became the restorer of the monarchy, and won from his people the surname of *the Wise*.

He was, in fact, prudent, patient, and ingenious in discerning the most favourable moment for carrying his designs into execution. But even these qualities would not have repaired the fortunes of France when they were brought so low, had not men of prowess and courage been about him, to head his armies and defend his throne; amongst whom Boucicaut, Oliver de Clisson, but above all, Bertrand du Guesclin, have left names famous in French history. The younger son of a Breton gentleman, without any advantages of person or fortune, and of so little capacity for book-learning that he could never be taught to read, Du Guesclin became the first French captain of his age.

His first exploit for Charles was a victory over the forces of the king of Navarre, near Evreux, which recovered nearly all Normandy for the crown of France. In his next battle he was less successful. The war in Brittany still continued, between John de Montfort the younger and Charles of Blois; and France and



England had agreed that they should each continue to succour the claimant whose cause they espoused, without breach of the peace between the two countries. Accordingly, King Charles had sent Du Guesclin with a body of troops to fight for his cousin of Blois, and the Prince of Wales had despatched the famous Captain Chandos with succour for De Montfort. The rival forces met on Michaelmas-day, 1365, at Auray, near Vannes. Chandos won a decisive victory. Du Guesclin was made prisoner, Charles of Blois slain, and De Montfort securely established in his dukedom. This was the end of the Breton war of succession, which had lasted twenty-four years, and had been productive of an extraordinary number of acts of perfidy and violence.

Peace having been concluded with Navarre, France was at rest from attacks on the part of her neighbours; but the cessation of war only increased the number of the disbanded military adventurers, "free companies," or "free lances," as they were called, who roamed the kingdom, doing infinite mischief. A large proportion of these men were English, or Gascons, subjects of England; and the wrongs they inflicted upon the country-people engendered a bitter animosity against the English nation in the hearts of the labouring classes.

At this time, Pedro IV., justly surnamed the Cruel, was king of Castile. Amongst the numerous exiles whom his tyranny had forced to fly the kingdom, was Henry of Trastamare, his illegitimate brother. Henry sought refuge in France, and Du Guesclin proposed to raise an army of thirty thousand "free lances," to attack Pedro, and place Henry on the throne in his stead. Charles gladly consented, telling his brave captain that to be rid of these men was more to him than the gain of another province. By the help of these allies, Henry deposed Pedro without a blow. That tyrant, escaping through Portugal to Coruna, took ship and came to Bordeaux, to throw himself at the feet of the Black Prince, and solicit succour.

Now, unhappily, appeared the defective nature of chivalrous morality. Pedro's story was that of a lawful but unfortunate monarch, dethroned and driven from his dominions by a bastard usurper, and the prince, though himself of a just and generous nature, deemed it his duty, as a true knight, to embrace the cause of the fugitive. With a large army he crossed the Pyrenees, and advanced on the Ebro to a town called Najara, or Navarette, where on the 3rd April, 1367, he won a very brilliant victory. Du Guesclin was taken prisoner, Henry of Trastamare fled from Spain, and Pedro was replaced on the throne. That ungrateful tyrant, however, neither paid the troops of his benefactor, nor supplied them with food. The want of wholesome provisions made them sicken and die in great numbers : and the Black Prince, worn out with fatigue and trouble (and, as some believed, poisoned by the wretched Pedro), returned to Bordeaux with a diminished army, an exhausted exchequer, and a broken constitution. But he brought with him Du Guesclin, the most formidable of his adversaries.

Asking him one day how he found himself, "Exceedingly well," said Du Guesclin, "for every one is saying that I must be the best knight in the world, since your highness will not name a sum for my ransom." "Sir knight," rejoined the prince, "you shall fix your own ransom." He fixed it at one hundred thousand crowns. "How will you raise so great a sum, Sir Bertrand?" "I know a hundred knights in my native Brittany," said Du Guesclin, "who would mortgage their last acre rather than I should languish in captivity ; and there is not a spinner in France who would not ply her distaff to pay my ransom." The Princess of Wales, who was present, offered him a large contribution towards it, saying that a knight who had so often afforded protection to women, deserved that every woman should help him. "Ah, lady !" said he, "being the ugliest knight in France, I never reckoned on any favour excepting from those whom I had aided or defended by my sword ; but your bounty will

make me think less despicably of myself." His brave rival Chandos, by whom he had been taken prisoner at Navarette, also placed his purse at his disposal. Set free on parole, Du Guesclin departed to collect the remainder of the money. As he was returning with it, he met ten poor knights who had been his fellow-soldiers and fellow-prisoners ; they were much troubled, not knowing where to find the sum at which their ransom was set. Du Guesclin gave them all he had collected, and returned to Bordeaux to be a prisoner again, till the king of France, needing his services, paid the sum which was wanting.

Charles V., whose *wisdom* was not of the kind which pays regard to truth and honesty when the prospect of great advantages would tempt to a breach of faith, was studiously deceiving the king of England and his son by a show of friendship, while secretly undermining their interests in Gascony. The lords of Gascony cared very little which king they acknowledged as their suzerain, so long as he would permit them to enjoy their independence ; but both France and England set so high a value on their alliance, that there was hardly a petty castellan in the country who had not been courted by messages, and by letters sealed with the great seal of France or of England. The value set by such powerful kings on the friendship of these petty nobles arose from their influence over their neighbours in Guienne, a great number of whom were connected with them by marriage and long association. Whenever one of the Gascon lords embraced the French party, a greater or less number of the knights and squires of Guienne joined with him the army of the king of France.

There was another reason why the fidelity of the people of Guienne could no longer be relied on, as in the days of the early Plantagenet kings. The successors of those sovereigns, as well as the descendants of the great barons and feudal chiefs who rallied round their banner, had grown more and more *English* with every succeeding generation.

These south-western provinces of France, the rich inheritance which Eleanor of Aquitaine had brought to Henry II., fair and valuable as they were, were still but a foreign dependency. England was now their home, the land of their dearest interests, the seat and bulwark of their power. Accordingly, the Aquitans had more intimate social relations with their French neighbours than with the officers and captains of their hereditary English lords, whose Anglo-Norman stateliness was altogether discordant with the vivacity and ease of these southern populations.

Not that the southern lords always embraced with heartiness the cause of France, even when they abandoned that of England.\* To secure the alliance of the Sire d'Albret, the lord of a little territory of heath and furze, Charles V. gave him in marriage his sister Isabelle. D'Albret came to Paris, where he was received and fêted in the palace of his royal brother-in-law; but in the midst of this cordial reception, he could not help saying to his friends, "I will remain French, since I have promised it; but God knows we had a better life, both I and my people, when we fought for the king of England." And there were several others who bore like testimony. As for the citizen, or middle class of the population, dwelling almost exclusively in the large towns, they were firm adherents of England; under the well-founded notion that the sway of a French king would be unfavourable to their municipal liberty and privileges. But their military strength was nought, compared with that of the hereditary chiefs and landowners.

\* About this time the king of France sent one of his chief officers to the Count de Foix, to ascertain distinctly on whose side that powerful lord was, as hitherto he had remained obstinately neutral. "Messire Louis," said the count to the envoy, "if I have abstained from arming, I had good reason and warranty therein; for the war between the kings of France and England concerns not me. I hold my country of Béarn of God, my sword, and my birthright; and I am in no way called upon to place myself in the servitude, or in the enmity, of either the one or the other king."

Unhappily, the Black Prince himself was fatally undermining his own and his country's influence. The treachery of the wretched tyrant Pedro, whom in an evil hour he had restored to his kingdom, had involved him in ruinous expense and loss. To this was added the embarrassment arising from the splendid and even lavish magnificence and bountifulness to which he was prone. He levied taxes on his Gascon subjects which were exceedingly unpopular—the *hearth* or *chimney* tax, in particular, which made itself felt in every house and cottage in the country—provoking a rebellion, studiously fomented by the agents of King Charles. The latter, with no very noble or generous qualities, possessed inestimable gifts of coolness, calculation, and frugality. He had been able to lighten some of the burdens and grievances which oppressed the kingdom at his accession, and he had amassed sufficient treasure to look forward without anxiety to the costs of war.

The constable of France dying at this time, he gave the office to Du Guesclin, who was thereby placed at the head of the military force of the whole realm, and enabled to carry out fully any undertaking which he meditated.

By the treaty of Brétigny, the king of France had renounced all right of sovereignty over Gascony and the other English possessions in France, acknowledging Edward III. as the independent lord of those countries. But Charles, pretending that the renunciations of the treaty had never been sufficiently executed, now asserted his right as suzerain, to call the English monarch to account, as his vassal, for the government of those great fiefs. Having encouraged the Gascon lords to make a formal complaint to him concerning the taxes lately imposed on their province, he now cited the Black Prince, as his father's viceroy, to take his trial before the Court of Peers, for misgovernment of a fief of the French crown.

The prince made answer that he would make his appearance, but that it should be at the head of 60,000 lances. But the once vigorous frame could no longer



obey the prompting of the intrepid spirit. He was already sinking beneath the long wasting malady which was to bring him down, step by step, to the grave. Charles, meanwhile, who retained too jealous a remembrance of the attempt which the States-general assembled during his regency had made to limit the power of the Crown, ever to summon them again if it could be avoided, now convened them, that he might secure the popular sanction for the war in which he was about to engage. He had assured himself beforehand of their acquiescence, which was, in fact, granted in the fullest manner.

Having also, by bribes and promises, and especially by gaining over the clergy to his side, induced the insurgents in the south to declare that they surrendered themselves to the king of France, he caused the Parliament of Paris to decree that, since Edward had failed to appear in person or by his representative before the Court of Peers, when cited to do so, he had forfeited all right to Aquitaine and his other possessions in France, which were therefore to be considered as confiscated to King Charles. And with the base satisfaction which a mean spirit, when secure, feels in insulting the foe before whom it has formerly trembled, Charles, who had fled from the mere sight of the English arms at Poitiers, now sent a scullion from the royal kitchen, to convey to the English monarch the sentence of confiscation, and declaration of war, should he decline to submit to it.

King Edward was naturally indignant, but he was falling into a decline more melancholy even than his son's, inasmuch as a moral and mental decay had preceded, in his case, the approach of bodily infirmity. He, however, despatched a large army under command of his son John, duke of Lancaster, who overran the north of France, up to the gates of Paris, without meeting any resistance. Charles had perceived that he was more likely to overcome the English forces by harassing delays, weariness, and want of necessary provisions, than by battle in the open field. His generals therefore had



orders to retreat before the advance of the enemy, while strong garrisons were placed in the fortified towns. Lancaster passed through the country, from Calais to Bordeaux, without being able to bring the French to an engagement. His brother, too ill now to sit on horseback, had caused himself to be transported on a litter into the Limousin, where the inhabitants of the chief city, Limoges, had been persuaded to revolt, and admit a French garrison, by their bishop, whom the prince had hitherto treated as an intimate friend. Enraged at this treachery, he threatened to put all the inhabitants to the sword, unless they opened their gates to him ; and having taken it after a close siege, put that cruel menace into execution. This miserable butchery was the melancholy close of a singularly brilliant warlike career. Unable to sustain any longer the fatigues of government or war, the Black Prince returned to England. He died in 1376 ; King Edward followed him at the end of a year. But already one reverse after another had befallen the English cause in France ; four-fifths of Lancaster's army had perished by sickness ; another considerable force embarked for Guienne had been driven back repeatedly by storms ; while town after town fell into the hands of the French, until they had possessed themselves of almost all Gascony.

The cause of England in France being at this low ebb, Charles thought he could safely take possession of Brittany ; the duke, John de Montfort, being an adherent of the English, who had placed him in possession of his dominions. By means of De Clisson and Du Guesclin, both of them Breton knights, Charles gained the adherence of most of the principal men, and compelled the duke to take refuge in England. He proceeded some time afterwards to confiscate the duchy, in defiance of all rights and treaties ; but the Bretons, jealous of their national independence, rose up as one man, recalled their duke, and defeated the attempt to subjugate them.

At this time Charles lost one of the main supports of

his power. Du Guesclin was seized with sickness while besieging the little fortress of Château Randon, and died there, 1380. The English commander had promised to surrender, if not relieved within a certain time. The day came; no relieving force had appeared, and the Englishman brought the keys of his fortress, and placed them on the coffin of the great captain. Though not free from the reproach of cruelty, Du Guesclin was worthy of great honour. His disinterestedness was remarkable; everything which the king bestowed upon him being expended in his master's service.

Charles was himself dying when the news of Du Guesclin's death reached him. He foresaw, in some degree, that troublous days were coming upon his kingdom; and called to him his chief counsellors, prelates, and barons, that he might discourse largely with them concerning state affairs. Then he desired that the crown of thorns might be placed before him, and putting his own crown beneath his feet, he said, "O crown of France, how art thou at once vile and precious! Precious in that thou art the symbol of justice; but vile, yea, the vilest of all things, if regard be had to the toil, the anguish, the peril to the soul, the trouble of heart, of conscience, and of body, which thou bringest on those who wear thee. If a man had knowledge of these things, he would rather let thee lie in the mud than lift thee up to put thee on his head." He blessed his son, the Dauphin Charles, a boy of eleven years; and expired shortly afterwards, in the forty-fourth year of his age, 26th September, 1380, after a reign of sixteen years.

The financial prosperity of Charles V. was partly due to the encouragement he afforded to Jewish merchants to settle and trade in his dominions. They alone were able at all times to afford him the necessary supplies of money; and he studiously refrained from persecuting or burdening so useful a class of men. But where no such end was to be gained, this king repressed all separatists from the Church with great severity; and multitudes of

reputed heretics were seized and burnt, in the vain hope of stifling that rising spirit of inquiry and independence which was beginning to show itself in all quarters, and which was, in some degree, favoured by the great schism of the rival Popes, which began towards the end of this reign.

The wishes of Italy and of Europe, joined with the evils arising from the removal of the papal throne to Avignon, had induced the last Pope, Gregory XI., to return to Rome in 1377. He died in the following year; and when the cardinals, mostly French, assembled to elect a successor, the populace collected, and insisted on his being an Italian. A Neapolitan was chosen, who took the name of Urban VI. At the end of a few weeks the cardinals conspired against him; some fell into his power, the rest fled to Fondi, and, alleging that they had elected Urban under intimidation, they chose another Pope, who was called Clement VII., and who fixed his seat at Avignon. Italy, Germany, England, and the north adhered to Urban; France, Spain, Scotland, and Sicily to Clement; and for many years to come there were two (at one time *three*) rival pontiffs.

This period is distinguished in history as that of *the Great Schism*. It was terminated by the Council of Constance, convoked in 1414, which compelled two of the pretenders to the popedom to abdicate, and deposed the third; after which Otto Colonna, a Roman of noble descent and upright character, was elected Pope. Colonna took the name of Martin V., and received the undivided obedience of the churches of Europe. But the schism had strengthened the nascent doubts concerning the pretensions of the papacy; and it thereby contributed, with other causes, to bring about the Reformation in the succeeding century.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Minority of Charles VI.: Misgovernment of the King's Uncles.—War in Flanders.—Punishment of the Revolt in Paris and other Cities.—Fruitless Hostilities against England.—Charles marries Isabeau of Bavaria.—Brief Reform of the Government.—The King becomes insane, 1392.—Misery of the King, and of France.—Invasion of Henry V., 1415.—Treaty of Troyes, 1420.—Death of Henry V., and of Charles VI., 1422.

FROM 1380 A.D. TO 1422.

THE reign of Charles VI. is briefly summed up by a great French historian, as "twenty years of guilt, followed by twenty years of shame." Charles V. had left three brothers,—the dukes of Anjou, Berri, and Burgundy. Anjou, the prince whose dishonourable evasion when left a hostage in England, in his father's stead, had occasioned King John's return to captivity, had recently been governor of Languedoc, where he had oppressed the people so unbearably that his brother had been forced to recall him.

The unhappy Languedocians were not long advantaged by his departure, their province being shortly placed under the duke de Berri, whose barbarity reduced them to despair. Multitudes of the people, stripped of everything by the rapacity of the duke's officers, fled to the forests, and formed themselves into bands of freebooters, who were for many years a terror to the great and wealthy.

The youngest brother of the late king, the duke of Burgundy, was that Philip who alone had remained to fight by his father's side at Poitiers, and whose gallantry on that occasion had made him signally his father's favourite. When the rich fief of Burgundy fell to the

Crown, by the death of its last duke without issue, shortly before the close of John's reign, he bestowed the splendid heritage on this his youngest son. And Philip having since married the heiress of Louis III., earl of Flanders, had joined to Burgundy, Artois, Franche Comté, French Flanders, and several important fortresses and towns. He was the best, or least cruel, of the brothers : but not one of them showed much care either for the welfare of their orphan nephew, or the good of his kingdom. No regent had been named, and the three dukes disputed the supreme authority one with another.

The first action of Anjou, as soon as his brother expired, was to hasten to the castle of Melun, where that politic and economical sovereign had deposited the treasure he had amassed for the necessities of his government, and to force the guardians of the money by threats and violence to place it in his hands. It amounted to sixteen millions, the whole of which this evil prince squandered for his own purposes. Nor had even this sufficed him, for he had left his brother's death-bed to pillage the palace of the jewels and other precious things which it contained.

Had Charles V. permitted the States-general to establish their claim to a just share in the government, instead of resenting every encroachment on his prerogative, his son and his son's kingdom might have been spared evils innumerable. There was now no power to counterpoise that of the dukes, and of Anjou in particular, who, as the eldest of the king's uncles, took possession of the government, and threw it into confusion. Having plundered the public treasury, he imposed exorbitant taxes to replenish it. But the burden was too great. Paris and several other chief towns broke out into insurrection. In the capital, the citizens crying out for arms ran to the town-hall, but found there no other weapons than leaden mallets, with which they beat down and killed most of the unfortunate tax-collectors ; whence this riot was called the revolt of the *Maillotins*, or *Malleters*.

The other towns were punished, and forced into submission; Paris presented so undaunted a front, that the dukes temporized, and affected to make peace, on receiving the offer of 100,000 livres. But they were only deferring their revenge till a favourable opportunity of crushing the rebellious citizens should arise.

“After doing as much mischief, and heaping up as much guilt as was possible for a ruler in the space of two years,” Anjou departed for Naples, hoping to enter on the sovereignty of that kingdom, Queen Joanna having adopted him for her heir. But before he reached the south of Italy, a sudden revolution frustrated his plans. The numerous crimes and murders of Joanna had been avenged upon herself; a rival competitor had taken possession of the throne, and Anjou, having seen his army cut off by want and sickness, perished himself,—dying, it was said, of mortification and disappointment (1382).

In the same year, the earl of Flanders, having driven the burghers of his great towns to revolt by continual infractions of their rights, fled to the court of the young king, and begged assistance. A large army was levied under command of the duke of Burgundy and of Clisson, who had succeeded to the post of constable of France after Du Guesclin's death. The Flemings, very inferior in numbers, though they formed an army of 50,000 men, were eager to fight in self-defence; but being all foot-soldiers, they formed themselves into one solid phalanx, each man tying himself to his neighbours with cords, that it might be impossible for the French cavalry to break their ranks. They forgot that they might be out-flanked and surrounded, which was, in fact, the manœuvre adopted by the enemy. Attacked on all sides, and pressed into a mere confused mass by the French horsemen, they could neither fight nor fly. Thousands perished unwounded, from mere suffocation; thousands more were slaughtered. Twenty thousand corpses strewed the field of Rosebec; over which, when the carnage was completed,



the young king, who had been kept out of the battle, was led in triumph, and congratulated in flattering terms upon his great victory. It fatally awakened in him a taste for blood. The revolted towns were given over to fire and pillage. Courtray, which had not revolted, afforded the king and his nobles a resting-place for two weeks. Unhappily for its people, a memorial of the great defeat which the French chivalry had sustained under its walls, just eighty years before, had been preserved in one of the churches, in the shape of five hundred gold spurs picked up on the field of battle. Furious that these Flemish burghers should dare to remember how their forefathers had defeated French knights and lords, the young king gave orders that the town and its inhabitants should be utterly destroyed. The savage command was carried out with ruthless barbarity. Courtray was reduced to a heap of ruins, and its peaceable, industrious population massacred without distinction of sex or age.

After this horrible exploit, the king and his army directed their march towards Paris. The citizens, divided between hope and fear, sent out their militia, 20,000 men armed and accoutred, to meet him; hoping either to gratify his pride by this exhibition of the warlike strength of his capital, or to deter him from proceeding to violent measures against them. But the constable, Clisson, who preceded the king, sternly ordered the burgher force back to the city, and gave orders that all should remain in their houses, unarmed, at the entry of Charles. The king arrived the next day, the gates being thrown wide open to admit him with all his host; but he refused to enter until a breach had been made in the walls, and so passed in like a conqueror taking possession of a besieged city. The people saw too plainly what they had to expect now. The privileges and rights of the city, its elective magistracy and guilds, its arms and means of defence, were immediately taken away. Then came the executions. Three hundred of the richest inhabitants were drowned,

hanged, or beheaded, almost without the pretence of a trial. The virtuous John Desmarets, one of the chief magistrates in the parliament, whose only fault had been that of endeavouring to mediate between the court and the city, was summarily condemned. "Ask mercy of the king!" cried many voices, when the venerable old man was led to the scaffold. He turned round, and said simply, "I have well and faithfully served his father, and his father's father and grandfather. Never had those kings fault to find with me; neither would this one, if he had yet arrived at the years and understanding of a man. There is no reason then that I should beg mercy of him. It is of God that I ask mercy, and pray him to forgive my trespasses."

After this all the citizens were assembled before the king. A long address was made to them, sternly rebuking their alleged crimes, and enumerating the grievous pains and penalties to which they had rendered themselves liable. When their terror and distress had been wrought by this means to the highest pitch, the dukes of Berri and Burgundy threw themselves at the king's feet, and prayed him to have compassion on his city of Paris. Charles, moved really or in seeming (for the whole scene had been previously concerted by his uncles), caused his chancellor to signify that he would graciously remit their deserved punishment, on condition that the Parisians brought him a fine of 400,000 livres. This was, in fact, the one object which the rapacious men who were about him desired to attain.

Rouen, Rheims, Châlons, Orleans, Sens, Troyes, the people of Auvergne, those of Languedoc, were all treated in the same way; awed into terror by numerous executions, and then enormously fined; for all had more or less shown symptoms of a desire to claim some degree of liberty, and that the abuses of the government should be restrained. The whole of the money wrung from the people was seized by the royal dukes, and the treasury remained empty.

Meanwhile the Flemings were preparing to renew the war. The excessive cruelty and violence of which the French had been guilty during the last campaign had excited general horror and indignation. Ghent, with a population of 100,000 souls, was at the head of the national league, and formed an alliance with England. No great battle took place, but after a year of skirmishes, in which the country suffered grievously, both from its allies and enemies, a truce was agreed to. The earl of Flanders alone would fain have continued the war, that Ghent might be subjugated, and was thereupon murdered by the duke of Berri, who was impatient to bring the negotiations to an end. Flanders now passed under the government of the duke of Burgundy, son-in-law of the murdered man ; and that prince, finding himself in possession of very large and wealthy territories, gradually withdrew from participation in the affairs of France.

The next four years were passed in fruitless hostilities against England. One army was sent into Scotland, to assist the Scots to invade the northern counties ; another was directed against the duke of Lancaster, who had conducted a force into Spain to claim the crown of Castile ; a third marched against the duke of Gueldres, who was in alliance with the English. But the main enterprise was to be an invasion of England, conducted by Charles himself, with the help of the duke of Berri and the constable Clisson. It took nearly a year to make the preparations. Fifteen hundred vessels were collected ; "enough," says Froissart, "to make a bridge from Calais to Dover:" there was a whole town of wooden houses, constructed by Clisson's orders in the forests of Brittany, which, when taken to pieces, loaded seventy vessels, and was destined to form a moveable camp for the army when it should have disembarked on the English shores. The young king flattered himself that he was going to act over again William the Norman. But after all had been prepared, and the vast armament duly assembled at the port

of Sluys, he spent so much time in feasts and diversions on his way to the coast, that it was the end of November ere he reached the rendezvous. His uncle Berri was yet more dilatory, having no heart for this enterprise. When at length he arrived, he easily persuaded his nephew that the right season for such an expedition was past. Charles disbanded the forces, and abandoned to the leaders the stores and material of war, which had been provided at immense cost. The armies sent into Scotland, Castile, and the territory of the duke of Gueldres, were beaten. Loss and disgrace were the only result of all these ambitious projects.

The king's uncles had married him, at the age of sixteen, to Isabeau of Bavaria, a very beautiful princess of fourteen ; but who in after-years proved a very wicked woman, and grievously aggravated the misery and disaster which overwhelmed her husband. When Charles reached the age of twenty, he seemed suddenly to awake from dreams of folly and licentious pleasure, and lent an attentive ear to some of his father's old counsellors, who conjured him to take pity on his kingdom, showing him how everything was falling to ruin ; the public money wasted, the course of justice perverted, schools, fortresses, roads, arsenals, all alike neglected, and in decay ; and crime rampant through the rapacity and profligacy of the great ones of the land. The cardinal bishop of Laon, especially, exhorted the king to so good purpose, that Charles in full council announced his intention of taking the government into his own hands, and applying a remedy to the disorders of the kingdom. A few days afterwards, the cardinal died by poison ; and none doubted that one or more of the royal dukes had brought about his murder. They retired immediately from the court ; and Charles was left to carry into effect his new resolutions.

He chose counsellors among the servants of Charles V., and placed at their head the constable Clisson. A crowd of petty tyrants who had been preying upon the people were soon turned out of office ; and the nation

looked on with new hope of better times, while the princes, indignant that their misgovernment had been checked, contemptuously scoffed at the new ministers as *nobodies*, and devised means to be rid of their control.

Before three years had elapsed, and while France was but beginning to taste the fruits of order, Clisson was attacked, in the midst of the streets of Paris, by a troop of assassins, with his mortal enemy, the lord de Craon, at their head. They left him as they believed dead ; but though miserably wounded, he survived. Charles swore vengeance on the murderers. Craon had fled to Brittany ; the king summoned the duke of Brittany to give him up, and on his refusal placed himself at the head of an army to invade the duchy. It was in the month of July, 1392, and the weather was intensely hot. As the king marched out of Mans, at the head of his troops, a maniac, clad from head to foot in white, suddenly darted forward, and seized the bridle of his horse, crying aloud, " O king, go no farther ! Thou art betrayed." The guards dragged him away, and the king rode on in silence ; but presently his page, becoming drowsy in the great heat, let the lance he was carrying fall forward and rattle on the helmet of the king's squire. Charles started at the sound, and with the cry, " Traitors ! traitors !" he ran furiously sword in hand on his officers and his own brother, Louis of Orleans, and killed four men before he could be seized and disarmed. He was insane. The excesses of all kinds to which he had been early accustomed had already injured his brain ; and the overpowering heat of that sultry march, joined to the shock produced by the warning of the stranger, completed the mischief.

At this time (1392) Charles was in his twenty-fourth year ; there remained yet thirty miserable years during which he was to be nominally king. His uncles seized the supreme authority again, cast the upright ministers who had been their nephew's best counsellors into prison, and obliged Clisson to take flight on a mock charge of treason. The insanity of Charles, though sometimes of a



very violent character, generally plunged him in imbecile melancholy, varied now and then with some gleams of reason and consciousness, of which the unprincipled men around him availed themselves to obtain the seeming sanction of the monarch for their tyrannical abuse of power. As years went on, his wife Isabeau, who at first had shown some regard for her unhappy consort, became utterly neglectful of him. With the king's brother, Orleans, she ran into every excess of luxury and dissipation, while her husband and her infant children, abandoned to the care of a few servants, more compassionate than their mistress, were sometimes in want of the necessities of life. Even this care failed the poor king at last ; and the state of personal neglect and destitution to which he was reduced, could hardly have been exceeded by that of the most indigent beggar in his dominions. His brother's wife, the virtuous and accomplished Valentina of Milan, had ministered to his wants, and soothed him even in his worst paroxysms, during the first years of his affliction ; but the foolish superstition of the day having attributed his insanity to witchcraft, the princes took advantage of this popular delusion to remove the duchess of Orleans from the court, on pretence that she used enchantments against the king.

Peace had been made with England in 1396, by the marriage of the king's eldest daughter, a little girl eight years old, to Richard II., on which occasion Richard solemnly renounced all claims to the crown of France. Three years afterwards, Richard was deposed ; and the rulers of France, refusing to recognize Henry of Lancaster as king, prepared for an invasion of England. The scheme was never carried out ; but the constant piracies of the French along the coasts, and the aid afforded by them to the Welsh chief, Glendower, in his attacks on England, kept alive the national animosity, and prepared the way for the invasion of France by Henry V., which involved the last years of Charles VI. in the deepest gloom of public calamity and discomfiture.



In the same year that the little Princess Isabella was espoused to Richard, a fine French army, numbering in its ranks the flower of the young nobility, had been utterly cut off under the walls of Nicopolis, in Bulgaria. A formidable invasion by the Turks had compelled Sigismund, king of Hungary, to solicit help from his brother monarchs. John, count of Nevers, eldest son of the duke of Burgundy, led the French auxiliaries, whose over-confident impetuosity in attacking the Turkish host proved fatal to themselves and the whole of the army. The Sultan Bajazet reserved only the count of Nevers and a few other captives, whose high rank led him to expect a great ransom; the remainder were slaughtered.

Eight years afterwards (1404), Nevers, who was surnamed John the Fearless, succeeded his father as duke of Burgundy, and began a desperate struggle with the king's brother, Orleans, for supreme power. Burgundy flattered the citizens and conciliated the good-will of Paris, by restoring the privileges of which it had been deprived in 1382. Orleans found his chief supporters amongst the aristocracy. Both had gathered troops, and civil war was about to begin, when the other princes interfered, and brought about a reconciliation, the two dukes solemnly receiving the Holy Communion together as a token and seal of their sincere attachment, November, 1407. A few days afterwards, Orleans was murdered by a band of assassins in the pay of Burgundy. The latter escaped from Paris, to return in a few weeks with an army of his own subjects of Burgundy and Flanders. He had already obtained letters of pardon from the poor imbecile king, who was made to justify the barbarous murder of his own brother, on the plea that it was an act of necessity, done for the good of the kingdom; and two years afterwards, a formal treaty of agreement was concluded between all parties. But the eldest son of the murdered duke having married the daughter of the count d'Armagnac, a very powerful nobleman of Gascony, the

faction opposed to Burgundy acquired fresh influence, and prepared for open war.

France was now split into two parties violently hostile to each other. "The name of Frenchman well-nigh died out, and the population was divided between Burgundians and Armagnacs." Armagnac brought an army of Gascons from the south, who displayed a greediness and ferocity never surpassed by any foreign enemy. They threatened the capital, and for many leagues round Paris the country became a scene of most horrible devastations. Burgundy, meanwhile, who had the king in his power, was all-powerful with the populace of Paris. Five hundred armed butchers, called *Cabochins* from *Caboche* their captain, were especially active in intimidating the opposite faction, and drew after them all the other trades of the capital. Burgundy obtained more reputable auxiliaries, in a select body of English troops, under command of the earl of Arundel, who assisted him to defeat the Armagnacs at St. Cloud (1411), but could with difficulty prevail on him to spare the lives of his prisoners. The following year, the Armagnacs sought help from England; actually promising to surrender all the provinces south of the Loire, if Henry IV. would embrace their cause. Tempted by their offers, he sent them 4,000 men under his son Clarence. The Dauphin Louis, a young man of feeble mind and dissipated habits, parleyed with each faction in turn, having neither courage nor patriotism enough to embrace any decided course of policy. But he was roused from his usual indifference, on learning that the Armagnacs were offering half his kingdom to the English, and united with the duke of Burgundy to compel them to renounce their league with Henry. Burgundy made a similar engagement no more to ally himself with foreigners, and a general amnesty, followed by the disbanding of the rival armies, seemed to promise France an interval of repose.

In the midst of the disorder the States-general had been convoked at Paris. But they were dumb, without

strength or courage in face of the general lawlessness, which seemed to recognize no right but that of the strongest. The Parliament of Paris was silent; the University remonstrated by the mouth of its learned doctors, but to little purpose. These learned men, however, with the help of some chief citizens of Paris, drew up a code of regulations, which embodied some most valuable reforms in the laws, the finances, and every branch of the government. It was announced that this code should henceforward become law; but although there were men in France wise enough to make good laws, there were none to put them in execution. The best citizens of the state would not meddle in public affairs, disgusted and alarmed at the criminal violence of the men who had struggled into power; and the new code, stigmatized as the *Cabochin Ordinance*, quickly sank into neglect.

The Cabochins, in fact, (that is, the lowest classes of the Burgundian party,) who had begun by acting with moderation, were now beginning a reign of terror, making war on wealth and rank. The duke of Burgundy himself was alarmed at their excesses. He left Paris, which straightway admitted the Armagnacs. Henry V. had succeeded his father in England, and at once prepared to attack France, professing to seek only the restoration of the provinces which had formerly belonged to the English sovereigns. After some fruitless negotiations, war was finally declared in the summer of 1415. Henry landed in Normandy, August 13th, laid siege to Harfleur, and captured it after a brave resistance, September 22nd. Sickness had so reduced his army that he could attempt nothing further, and set out to march towards Calais. His army, amounting now only to 15,000 men, was followed and harassed by the French forces, 54,000 in number, under command of the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, who, having cut up the direct road, took post at Agincourt, to intercept Henry's march to Calais. The two armies came in sight, October 24th. The condition of the English was (to appearance) melancholy. They

were worn out by hard marches, no retreat was open behind them, and in front was an army more than three times their number. But a midnight attack made on their camp, in the midst of a great storm, was beaten off, and in the battle fought on the following day they defeated the French completely. The loss of France was enormous in this action, fully three thousand of the slain being men of rank, and a far greater number of inferior condition. The dukes of Orleans and Bourbon were taken prisoners.

Soon after this disastrous day the Dauphin Louis died ; his next brother quickly followed him ; and the only surviving son of the king was Charles, a boy about thirteen years old at the time of his brother's death.

In the midst of all this trouble, civil war broke out more fiercely than before. Armagnac was detested in Paris, where he reigned by slaughtering those who were opposed to him. A few young men plotted to readmit the Burgundians, and succeeded. Armagnac and his partisans were seized and thrown into prison. The second Sunday afterwards, the populace, seized with sudden fury, stormed every prison in Paris, and murdered all whom they found there ; 1,600 bleeding corpses were thrown out into the streets, and the Armagnacs were butchered wherever they were found. But their troops had still command of the Seine above Paris, and the English forces held the river below ; for Henry had taken great part of Normandy. Provisions became exceedingly scarce in the capital, the people were dying of hunger. Then came pestilence, and swept away many thousands, and with the approach of winter the wolves came in hordes, even to the gates of the city.

The conduct of the queen had been so exceedingly bad that she had been placed under restraint at Tours for some time. She escaped from her confinement at this time, and reconciled herself with the duke of Burgundy, 1418. In the next year Henry V. had several conferences, at Melun, on the Seine, with the queen and

Burgundy. Isabeau had brought with her her daughter Katherine, whom Henry was desirous to espouse, in the hope of inducing him to abate something of his demands. But Henry would make no concessions. Burgundy was alternately negotiating with the English and with the Dauphin, who was now about sixteen. The latter invited him to a meeting on the bridge of Montereau; he came, and was assassinated by the Dauphin's attendants, under the eye of their young master (August 12th, 1419). The son of the murdered duke, who afterwards won from his subjects the title of Philip the Good, immediately allied himself with the English, and a truce was proclaimed between Henry and all the towns which adhered to the Burgundians. On the 21st of May, 1420, a treaty was concluded at Troyes, which promised to crown with final success the long-cherished pretensions of the house of Plantagenet to the throne of France.

The guilty Isabeau, unnatural wife and mother, took a prominent part in the negotiation of this treaty, which pronounced her only surviving son unworthy to reign, "on account of enormous crimes and misdemeanours," and assigned the kingdom to Henry and his heirs for ever, after the death of Charles VI. During the remainder of King Charles's life, Henry was to act as regent of France; and he solemnly engaged to maintain the rights of all classes and communities within the kingdom, and to govern with constant regard to the laws and approved customs of the realm. In accordance with this promise, Henry quickly summoned the States-general, who met, however, only to give their full consent and sanction to all that had been done. The poor insane king appeared in person before them, and acknowledged the treaty of Troyes as his own free and spontaneous act, declaring that it would redound to the glory of God, to his own advantage, and to the benefit of all his subjects,—a speech which was received with loud applause by the three estates.

The Parliament of Paris condemned the Dauphin as

guilty of the murder of John the Fearless, and declared him justly deprived of the succession to the throne; while the States-general, to aid the English king in his war against the prince, authorized levies of money in the most oppressive forms.—as, for example, that all persons possessing property were to be compelled to make loans to Henry, on such terms as it might please him to offer.

The espousals of the conqueror with the Princess Katherine had been solemnized with extraordinary magnificence. They soon afterwards made their triumphant entry into Paris, and took up their abode there in regal state; the citizens, equally weary of Burgundians, Armagnacs, and mob authority, willingly resigning themselves to the government of the English king. The Dauphin, meanwhile wandered about the provinces south of the Loire, flying before the advance of the English troops, though his Scottish auxiliaries inflicted a severe defeat on Henry's brother Clarence, at Beaugé, in Anjou, in March, 1421. Clarence, wounded and unhorsed, was trampled to death in the fight.

In August of the following year, Henry V. died, after a short illness, at Vincennes. Two months afterwards he was followed to the grave by his unfortunate father-in-law, and the crowns of England and France met on the brows of an infant, the son of Henry and Katherine.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

Condition of France at the Death of Charles VI.—Richemont.—Siege of Orleans.—Joan of Arc; her Character. Mission, and Triumphs.—Charles VII. crowned at Rheims, 1429.—Captivity and Fate of Joan.—Charles received as King in Paris, 1436.—His able Government.—Guienne permanently wrested from the English, 1453.—Jacques Cœur.—The Dauphin Louis.—Death of Charles VII., 1461.—Liberties of the Gallican Church.

FROM 1422 A.D. TO 1461.

SINCE the death of St. Louis, the kings of France, while becoming more absolute, had forfeited by the abuse of their power, that loyal attachment of the people which had heretofore proved one of the chief supports of the throne. Ground down by arbitrary exactions, pillaged by mercenary soldiers, and oppressed by the tyranny of a multitude of petty despots, the people had ceased to find a protector in their sovereign, and no longer regarded his cause as their own. This disaffection, which had given rise to numerous revolts, had also greatly favoured the rapid progress of the English arms.

The woes under which France had groaned during one hundred and fifty years had been suspended indeed during the latter years of Charles V.; but they had returned again with more oppressive weight under the reign of his unhappy successor; and at the death of Charles VI., the French monarchy existed but in name, and the kingdom appeared to be on the eve of a general dissolution. A far different future was, however, reserved for France.

Effectually to overcome the armed resistance of the great feudatories, to unite to the Crown the states which were still separate from it, and to bind durably together

in one nation the populations of diverse origin, who inhabited the territories included between the Rhine, the Jura, and the Alps, the Pyrenees and the ocean, it was necessary that supreme authority should be centred in the throne, and vigorously exerted by the monarch. The very success of the English helped to undo their work ; for the desire to escape from subjugation to foreign masters made the people turn once more to their king, as the only deliverer who could free France from the yoke of the stranger. And from the time of Charles VII. to the final extinction of the feudal system, the fortunes of the Crown seemed once more to be closely linked with those of the people, and the power of the throne increased proportionably with the strength of the nation.

The superintendence of a Divine hand, guiding the course of national events, is never so manifest to human apprehension as when, giving not the race to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, it literally employs the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. In such a manner Providence was pleased to interfere for the deliverance of France, during the reign on which we are now entering.

The duke of Bedford, eldest brother of Henry V., governed France in the name of his infant nephew. He was in close alliance with the two greatest feudatories of the kingdom, the dukes of Brittany and Burgundy ; and the latter, to cement more firmly his alliance with England, gave his sister in marriage to Bedford. The Dauphin Charles, who was nineteen years old at the time of his father's death, had taken the title of king, and resided at Bourges, with his wife, Mary of Anjou. His authority, however, was acknowledged only by the remnants of the Armagnac faction in the midland and south-eastern provinces ; for the people generally, remembering the horrible excesses of which the Armagnacs had been guilty, hesitated to range themselves on the side of a prince who was supported by the members of a

party which had rendered itself so odious. The soldiers of Charles were nearly all foreigners,—Scots, and Armagnacs or Gascons, who regarded themselves as men of another race than Frenchmen. His commander-in-chief, or constable, was a Scot, the earl of Buchan ; and Charles, surrounded by defenders who could feel no patriotic enthusiasm in the success of his cause, appeared to take very little interest in it himself.

Meantime, all the western and northern provinces of France were held in the name of the infant King Henry ; and during the seven years which followed his accession, the fortune of the English arms was generally prevalent. At Verneuil, in 1424, the French army was defeated so signally that the victory was compared to those of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. The Scottish auxiliaries were that day cut to pieces under their leaders of proud name—the Stuarts and Douglasses ;—to the satisfaction, it is said, of the French whom they had come to help, but who were oppressed as cruelly by their lawless allies as by their open enemies. The countries between the Loire and the Seine were generally the scene of warfare, and a French historian thus describes their condition :—

“ France to the north of the Loire had become one vast solitude ; the country was deserted, and there were no men but in forests or fortresses ; even the cities were rather quarters for soldiers than dwelling-places of the inhabitants. The cultivation of the soil was abandoned, except round the walls, under the ramparts, and within sight of the sentinel in his tower. As soon as an enemy was perceived, the alarm-bells were rung, the labourers flew into the town, the very cattle had learnt a sort of instinct which taught them to take to flight. Theft and robbery were of necessity the only occupation of houseless wretches.”

“ Still as hostilities were not urged with that unceasing and overwhelming vigour which treads out every spark of revolt, time was lending its accustomed, though scarcely perceived aid, to those who clung with unconquerable

attachment to the defence of their country." The French people naturally imputed all their calamities to the English conquerors, and resentment against them gradually spread through all classes of the community.

The defeat of Verneuil had made Charles sensible that he needed powerful supporters among his own people, if his cause was to be saved from ruin. Hoping to detach Brittany from the English alliance, he offered the duke's brother, Arthur, the command of his forces and the sword of constable, Buchan having perished at Verneuil. Arthur, whom Henry IV. had created earl of Richmond in England, but who had early abandoned his English allegiance, won for himself eventually a famous name in France as the Constable *Richemont*. He accepted the offers of Charles, on condition that the latter would dismiss from his court all Armagnacs, together with the assassins of John the Fearless. In place of these men, he introduced other favourites and confidants to the king, who suffered them to obtain entire ascendancy over him, yet parted from them without the slightest emotion when Richemont, conceiving that they were become too powerful, put them, one after another, to death. A third favourite, La Tremouille, apprehending a similar fate, procured the dismissal of the constable. Charles now saw his chief adherents divided between the favourite and the general, but was himself equally indifferent to both, caring only for pleasure, and sunk in voluptuous indolence.

In 1428, the English laid siege to Orleans, the most important of the towns which remained to Charles. It was defended by the brave Dunois, and other famous captains, who could not, however, prevent the assailants from taking possession of all the exterior defences, and throwing up a line of forts by which they blockaded the city. The defeat of the French and Scots in the battle of *The Herrings* \* seemed to insure the reduction of

\* The battle received this name on account of a convoy of salt-fish brought to the English camp. In the attack the French

Orleans, and with it the final ruin of the French cause. But the time of deliverance was come : and "that wonderful visionary, Joan of Arc, appeared," to restore the sinking fortunes of her king and country.

*Joan or Jeanne d'Arc*, known in French history as *The Maid of Orleans*, was a peasant's child, born about 1412, in the village of Domremy, on the border of Lorraine ; a modest, truthful, industrious girl, who was remarkable for the gravity of her character and the ardour of her devotions. The country about Domremy, like other parts of France, was divided between the rival factions of French and Burgundians, or English. The people of Joan's village were zealous royalists, those of a neighbouring village, Burgundians ; and there were constant feuds between them. Even the children had their fights, and Joan's own brothers were sometimes among the combatants. On one occasion, Domremy was taken possession of by the adverse party, and the inhabitants fled to a neighbouring town with so much of their property as they could carry with them. When they returned, their church was a ruin ; the enemy had burnt it ; and thenceforth, sacrilege against God as well as disloyalty to the rightful king seemed to brand the cause of their Burgundian neighbours. In Joan's mind, fervent religious feelings were mingled with thoughts of her afflicted country, and earnest longings for its rescue. At thirteen, she began, as she believed, to hear "voices" of saints and angels, admonishing her to succour her country ; and still, as she grew up, and the cause of which she was to be the champion seemed to become more desperate, her inward conviction that God had chosen her to work out the deliverance of France grew stronger and more intense. But she said nothing to any one until her "voices" became more explicit, and her mission assumed a definite shape. She was about seventeen when it was revealed to her that she must raise the artillery broke the barrels, and the battle-field was strewn with herrings.

siege of Orleans ; and conduct the *Dauphin* to Rheims, to be crowned : the *Royal* title being in abeyance till the anointing oil had been poured upon his head. With much difficulty and discouragement, especially from her parents, who were almost out of their senses when they found that their prayers and tears could not turn her from her purpose, the heroic maiden made her way to Charles, who was lingering amidst the pleasures that he loved at his castle of Chinon, between Tours and Saumur, while Dunois and his garrison, sorely pressed by the besiegers, held out with persevering bravery.

When admitted to the royal presence, she singled out Charles at a glance from the crowd of courtiers, and, embracing his knees, announced herself as *Joan the maid*, sent by Heaven to succour him and his kingdom. "Most noble dauphin," she added, "God sends you word by me that you shall be consecrated and crowned at Rheims ; and you shall be the lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is the King of France." Wondering much, and doubtful whether her supernatural pretensions were inspired from above or beneath, Charles sent the maid to Poitiers, to be examined by prelates and doctors in theology. Their decision left him free to employ her services. Charles gave her armour and a horse, and assigned her a body-guard, while Joan, under the direction of her "voices," had a white banner prepared. "It was besprinkled with the *fleur-de-lis* of France ; the Saviour, too, was pictured on it, holding the world in His hands, with attendant angels ; while the words Jesus, Maria, declared to friends and foes in whose name she fought."

Meanwhile levies of soldiers were going on ; and by the middle of April, 1429, an army for the relief of Orleans was mustering at Blois. Already rumours of a supernatural champion coming to fight for France were spread abroad both among besieged and besiegers ; and while the former saw in this the intervention of Divine favour, the latter believed that it was a device of the devil, and were greatly intimidated thereat. "But



lately," says an old chronicle, "two hundred English skirmishers would have chased five hundred French, and now two hundred of the last would have been more than a match for four hundred English." Her first adventure in war was to conduct the relieving force to Orleans, and accompany within the city a convoy of provisions greatly needed by the garrison. "In eight days," she said, "Orleans shall be delivered;" and it was so. The forts with which the besiegers had surrounded the city were taken one after the other. Talbot and Suffolk, the English generals, no longer eager for battle, were forced to look on from the opposite side of the Loire, while the last of those posts, defended with heroic resolution by five hundred men, the flower of the English army, fell at the end of a long day's fighting into the hands of the wonderful Maid. No persuasion could induce their men to stir against "the sorceress." They raised the siege, and the first half of Joan's mission was accomplished.

She would fain have fulfilled immediately the other half, and pressed an instant march to Rheims; but other counsels prevailed, and it was resolved first to drive the enemy from the fortresses which lined the banks of the Loire. Some weeks were passed in sieges; but on the 18th of June the English commanders, Talbot and Fastolf, having united their forces, gave battle near the village of Patay, and sustained a decisive defeat, Talbot being made prisoner and two thousand of his men slain. The English, indeed, fought like men under a spell; the veterans of a hundred fights flying panic-struck from the field. "It was now or never the time to venture on the expedition to Rheims. The politicians wanted to remain still on the Loire, and take Cosne and La Charité first; but this time they talked in vain; no timid counsels could now be listened to. Every day brought people flocking in from all the provinces, attracted by the fame of the Maid's miracles, and believing only in *her*, and in her purpose forthwith to convey the king to Rheims. There was an irresistible outburst of the pilgrim and crusading spirit.

The indolent young king himself at last yielded to the popular flood, and suffered himself to be borne along by that vast tide that set in towards the north ; and off they started all together, willingly or perforce ; king and courtiers, the politic and the enthusiastic, the mad men and the wise men. They were twelve thousand when they began their march, but their numbers augmented continually as they advanced ; every hour brought them additional strength, and those who had no armour followed the holy expedition in plain doublets, as archers or sword-and-buckler men, even though they were of gentle blood.

“The army marched from Gien on the 28th of June, without attempting to enter, that town being in the hands of the duke of Burgundy, whom they desired to conciliate and bring over to the national side. Troyes had a mixed garrison of Burgundians and English, who ventured to make a sortie on the first appearance of the royal army. There seemed small chance of storming a town so well guarded, and that, too, without artillery. On the other hand, how was it possible to advance and leave such a place in their rear ? The army was already suffering from scarcity : were it not better to return ?

“The anti-enthusiasts were triumphant. But there was one old councillor who was of a contrary opinion ; well knowing that in such an enterprise prudence was on the side of enthusiasm, and that men must not reason in a popular crusade. ‘When the king undertook this march,’ he said, ‘he did it not by reason of the number of his forces, or the abundance of his money, nor because the achievement seemed to him possible. He undertook it because Joan told him to advance and be crowned at Rheims, and that he would encounter little resistance by the way, such being the good pleasure of God.’ The Maid then presented herself at the door of the council-room, and assured them they would be able to enter the town in *three* days. ‘We would wait six,’ said the chancellor, ‘if we were sure what you say is true.’ ‘*Six!* you shall enter *to-morrow*.’

"She seizes her standard: the whole army follow her to the ditch, and they throw into it all they can lay their hands on,—faggots, doors, tables, rafters,—with such rapidity that the townspeople thought the ditches would very soon disappear altogether. The English began to be dazzled and bewildered, as at Orleans, and fancied that they saw a cloud of white butterflies fluttering round the magic standard. The burghers, on their part, were in great dread, recollecting that it was in Troyes the treaty had been concluded which disinherited Charles VII., and fearing that an example would be made of their town. Already they were taking refuge in the churches, and crying out that the town must surrender. The garrison, who desired nothing better, parleyed, and obtained leave to depart with what they had.

"*What they had* was chiefly prisoners, Frenchmen. The king's councillors, who had drawn up the capitulation, had stipulated nothing with respect to those unfortunate persons. The Maid alone thought of them. When the English marched out with their prisoners, she stood at the gates, and cried out, 'In God's name, they shall not carry them off.' She stopped them, and the king paid their ransom." Master of Troyes on the 9th of July, Charles made his entry into Rheims on the 15th, and was crowned on the 17th. The archbishop anointed him with oil out of the holy ampulla brought from St. Remi. In conformity with the ancient usage, he was lifted up to his seat by the ecclesiastical peers, and served by the lay peers, both at the coronation and the banquet.

"All the ceremonies were completed without any omission or abridgment, and Charles was now the true king and the only king, according to the notions of the times. The English might now crown Henry if they would; but that new coronation could never, in the eyes of the two nations, be more than a parody of the other."\*

During the ceremony the Maid stood near the king and the

\* Michelet, quoted by the late Rev. J. H. Gurney, to whom the writer is much indebted for the Life of Joan d'Arc.

altar, with her standard in her hand. When all was over, she fell on her knees before him, and kissed his feet, shedding warm tears the while, and said, "Gentle king, now is accomplished the pleasure of God, who willed that you should come to Rheims to receive your consecration, thereby showing that you are the true king, to whom the kingdom of right belongs. I have performed that which was commanded me; and now I would the king should send me back to my father and mother, to look after their sheep and cattle, and do what I was wont to do."

But the king's captains entreated that she might remain with them, since her presence with the army seemed to be the pledge of victory; and she remained. But though brave as ever, she no longer felt the same confidence. Her "voices" were far less frequent henceforth; she was less clear in her own mind and more swayed by the counsels of others. In an unsuccessful attempt of the royal army to take Paris, Joan was severely wounded; and from this time many who had hitherto followed her most undoubtingly began to waver. In the spring of the following year (1430), Compiègne, which had surrendered to the king, was attacked by the Burgundians, who hoped to recover it. Joan gallantly came to its rescue, but was captured while protecting the retreat of a body of men pursued by the besiegers, and given up to John of Luxembourg, the commander of the siege, a vassal of the duke of Burgundy. The duke, longing for commercial privileges for his subjects, was anxious to secure the good-will of England, and what gift could be so acceptable to the regent Bedford as the Maid? Ten thousand livres were paid therefore to John of Luxembourg, and poor Joan was given over to the men who sought her life, who indeed accounted her (to quote the very words of the meek King Henry himself) "a disciple and limb of the fiend. . . . who used false enchantments and sorcery."

Cauchon, bishop of Beauvais, desiring to ingratiate himself with Cardinal Beaufort, through whom he hoped

to obtain the archbishopric of Rouen, claimed the privilege of trying the Maid, who had been captured within his jurisdiction; and after weary months of imprisonment in the castle of Beaurevoir, Joan was brought to Rouen, and placed on her trial before a court of abbots, canons, and doctors, learned in theology and law, having Cauchon at their head. Before this formidable host, the poor Maid had to stand up without advocate or friend, to answer for herself. For weeks together, they plied her day after day with questions about her childhood, her religious teachers, her early youth, her "voices" and visions, her military career,—everything, in short, which she had done or left undone, all tending to the same end, that of making her criminate herself by some admission which should fasten on her the guilt of heresy or witchcraft. All that had been reported by friends to her honour, or invented by enemies to bring scandal on her name, was turned against her with ingenious, persevering malignity, by Cauchon and his assessors. Her patience, her discretion, and her simple truthfulness, never failed. To questions about her words and deeds in battle, she replied, "I said, 'Go boldly in amongst the English,' and I went in myself." "Does God hate the English?" said Cauchon. "Of the love or hatred which God has for the English, I know nothing," she answered; "but I know they will all be driven out of this land, excepting those who perish in it." "Do the saints hate the English?" asked he. "They love what God loves and hate what He hates." "Was it in her banner or in herself that she trusted?" inquired her judges. "I trusted in the Lord, and in none beside," she said. "Do you think that you are in a state of grace?" asked the bishop. "If I am not," replied Joan, "I pray God bring me to it; and if I am, may He keep me in it. I should be the most wretched creature on the earth if I thought I were not in His favour." "Did you know that people on your side had masses celebrated, and prayers offered up, to do you honour?" "If they had any holy service celebrated



on my account, I never told them," she said; "and if they prayed for me, surely it was not ill done." Questioned about her "voices," she said, "I believe firmly, as firmly as I believe that God redeemed us from the pains of hell, that the voice came from God." But with such questions were mingled endless teasing puerilities; how the saints whom she had seen in her visions were dressed? how she knew one from another? whether they had wings or arms? &c., &c., while the poor girl listened often through half a day, trying to recall the long-past dreams and musings of her excited fancy, which had shaped themselves into glorious appearances of heavenly visitants. And each day she was remanded back to her weary prison, chained there to a post, guarded by rude soldiers, and denied all participation in the religious services for which her soul thirsted. The rack was carried into her prison, and men stood by ready to put her to the torture; and thus confronted, she was exhorted to confess the truth. But she could say no otherwise, she told them, than she had said. The end came at last. In May, 1431, a year after her capture, the University of Paris, to whom Cauchon had referred the case, pronounced poor Joan "a blasphemer and despiser of the Holy Sacraments," "a crafty and cruel traitress, thirsting for human blood," "a schismatic and apostate," and much more to the same purpose.

"All was ready now for the sacrifice, and on the 1st of June, she was appointed to die at the stake. A few hours' warning only was given to her, and the poor girl, with natural shrinking from that horrible form of death, burst into tears, and said she would rather lose her head seven times over than be burnt. But she soon recovered calmness. Eight hundred English soldiers conducted her to the fish-market of Rouen, where the pile on which she was to suffer had been raised to an immense height, that the vast assembled multitude might all behold the spectacle. She poured forth many fervent supplications, called upon friends and enemies to pray for her, and gave



heartly forgiveness to all who had done her wrong. The hardest hearts were melted into pity for the moment. Cauchon wept, Cardinal Beaufort wept, the whole people whispered among themselves that foul wrong was done her; while Joan stood praying, surrounded by the advancing flames, her eyes fixed on the cross which a good monk had fetched for her from the neighbouring church. An Englishman who had vowed to throw a faggot on the burning pile, kept his promise, but his hatred of the supposed witch was presently turned to terror; for the demeanour of the Maid so wrought upon his mind, that he felt like one condemned and lost, declaring to his comrades that as Joan sank into death he saw a dove soar upwards from her ashes."

During the whole time of Joan's imprisonment and cruel trial, neither her king, nor any of the captains of France, made one effort to save the heroic maiden to whom they owed so much. No ransom could have been too great to offer, no enterprise, one would have thought, too hazardous to be risked. Yet it does not appear that any one of them so much as offered a remonstrance, or attempted even to intercede for her, or bear testimony to her unblemished life. As for Charles, he had relapsed into his former languid indolence, and he allowed twenty-five years to pass by before he attempted to clear her character from the calumnious accusations which her iniquitous judges had heaped upon it. "One thing he could not help doing; he enjoyed the fruit of her triumphs, and yet more was gathered in, year by year, after her course was run." Joan's work had roused the nation, and it never sank back again into despondency, till it had won its own land of France out of the hands of the stranger, and recovered its ancient fame.

The duke of Bedford brought the young King Henry to Paris, and had him crowned there soon after Joan's death; but the ceremony availed little while his generals were losing town after town. He abdicated his title of regent of France, to confer it on the duke of Burgundy;

but the Burgundian allies of the foreign rulers had become as odious to the people as the foreigners themselves, and everywhere they were shaking off the yoke.

Yet France was suffering not a little from her own chosen lords and defenders. For Charles, withdrawn altogether from the camp, and surrounded by mistresses and courtiers, took no account of what his captains were doing ; and they, without orders, without pay, without supplies of any kind, carried on a sort of partisan warfare, one here, another there ; living at free quarters on the people, in whatever part of the country they happened to be. Richemont, at last, who had been long in disgrace, imputing the king's supineness to the evil influence of La Tremouille, sent one of his followers to attack the favourite by night in his own house, and carry him off. Charles testified neither regret nor displeasure ; but, on the contrary, allowed the constable to resume the direction of affairs. Nearly at the same time Bedford died (October, 1435), and the link which had so long bound Burgundy in alliance with England was broken. He had not much confidence in the men who were now to take the direction of the English cause, and in December of that year he concluded a peace with the king of France. It was impossible that the foreign domination could be maintained now ; and on the 13th April, 1436, the English garrison marched out of Paris, and Charles, for the first time since his accession, was received as sovereign in his capital.\*

Normandy and Guienne still remained to be won ; but before this was accomplished, a change had taken place in the mind and habits of Charles as great as that which had been wrought in his kingdom. He rose, at length, with his rising fortune, and displayed a degree of vigour

\* His mother, Queen Isabeau, had died three days before. She had long before fallen into disrepute among all classes, on account of her vices. Her corpse was thrown into a wherry, and rowed to St. Denis by a few hired attendants, with no pretence of respect or of regret.

and sagacity, both in civil and military affairs for which no one had hitherto given him credit. The wasting plague of France was still the multitude of military marauders. Even some of the king's most celebrated captains, La Hire and others, pillaged friends and foes alike, and gloried in the terror with which their names inspired the peasantry. Charles took the first step towards remedying this long-enduring evil, at a very brilliant and important assembly of the Three Estates, which he convoked at Orleans, in 1439. He obtained from them a tallage\* of 1,200,000 livres for the maintenance of a standing army, which he divided into fifteen bodies of horse and foot, stationed in the principal places of the kingdom. The choicest of his mercenary soldiers and their captains were incorporated into this permanent force, and some wholesome examples of severity restrained the licence of the others. By this means, he had henceforward at his disposal an army ready to act whenever and wherever he needed their services ; and the receipt of regular pay rendered the soldier no longer dependent on the subsistence he could exact, or extort, from the people. Well satisfied with the results of the concession he had obtained from this assembly of the States, but fearful, it is said, lest they should exert too much influence, and encroach on his own kingly power, he obtained an augmentation of the tallage to 1,800,000 livres (equal to about fifteen millions of the actual money of France), and never again convoked them ; merely summoning from time to time an assembly of "notables," or chief persons selected by himself or the deputies of some particular provinces, to assist him with their advice.

Crime of every kind had increased so terribly during the long years of anarchy, that the king gave power to a judge of his own choice to try and to condemn every one who should be proved guilty. This was quite contrary to the usual law and custom, which assigned these

\* See note at end of this chapter.

judicial powers to the Parliament; but the people were thankful for any government which would save them from the evils they had been suffering, whether it were in agreement with the regular laws of the country or not. Commerce revived, the cultivation of the land was pursued in peace, and the king was honoured as the restorer of his country.

The only malcontents were some of the nobles and military leaders, who found their former unbridled licence restrained by the new regulations concerning the army. They invited the Dauphin Louis, a youth of seventeen, to join their league. But the king, strong in the support of the bulk of the nation, defeated these cabals. He found an outlet for the wild and untameable spirits among the soldiery in two expeditions, one of which was sent under command of the Dauphin, whose ability far exceeded his virtue, to support the emperor, Frederick III., against the Swiss. The other was directed against Metz, a free city of Lorraine, which René of Anjou, the duke of Lorraine, wished to incorporate with his duchy. An extraordinary battle was fought in the Swiss campaign. At St. Jacques, near Basle, sixteen hundred Swiss rashly attacked the French army, which outnumbered them tenfold, and when the strength of the enemy made victory hopeless, still fought on without asking for quarter, or dreaming of flight, till not a man remained standing on the field. The French loss amounted to the almost incredible number of *eight thousand slain*. It occasioned little or no sorrow, for these 8,000 were chiefly of the class of military adventurers by whom France had been so harassed. As for the Dauphin, he was so struck by the bravery of those Swiss peasants fighting for their homes, that he resolved to have them for allies in future; and in spite of the emperor, for whom he professed to be making war, he concluded a treaty with them (1444).

The fatal marriage-treaty between Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou ceded to her father the territories of Maine and Anjou. They were the keys of Normandy,

which, being placed in the weak hands of René, soon opened that province to French armies. In 1449, they invaded it at several different points; Rouen opened its gates to the king in the autumn, and in the following year the whole of Normandy was regained by him. In 1451, the French overran Gascony and Guienne; the people of the latter province, however, and especially the city of Bordeaux, were ill-disposed to obey French rulers. They sought aid from Henry VI., and the aged Talbot, the most renowned of his father's captains, was sent with a small force to their help. A gleam of fame seemed to light up the hoary brows of the hero. But his ancient fortune as a commander had deserted him, and in July, 1453, he fell fighting valiantly at Castillon in the 81st year of his age. The victory of the French was complete, and opened the road to Bordeaux, which they proposed to starve into a surrender, having wasted the adjoining country, and blocked up the port with a fleet of Breton and Flemish vessels. After eleven weeks' siege, the garrison demanded to capitulate, and obtained permission to take with them all the citizens who desired to go. So great a number departed in this way, that for many years Bordeaux remained almost without population, and without commerce. Long after the conquest many of the people of Guienne regretted the government of the English, and watched occasion to resume correspondence with them. So much was the effect of these regrets feared, that edicts, issued by several kings of France, forbade any Englishman to reside at Bordeaux. English merchants might not even enter any house in the town, or go into the country to taste and buy wines, unless they were accompanied by armed men, and officers expressly appointed to watch their words and actions.

But despite its regrets, the province of Guienne remained French; and the kingdom of France was extended from the Channel to the Pyrenees.

Amongst the wise counsellors who had strengthened the hands of Charles, and enabled him to effect much for



the internal prosperity of his dominions, at the same time that he expelled from them foreign invaders, one of the very foremost was a sagacious, upright banker and merchant of Bourges, named Jacques Cœur. Cœur, who had agents in many parts of Europe and Asia, was immensely rich, and placed his riches without stint at the disposal of his sovereign for all purposes of public utility. But he was destined to the fate of all who had served Charles VII. Greedy courtiers, the lord of Dammartin chief amongst them, coveted the wealth of Cœur; they brought false accusations against him, and the king, ungrateful to this faithful minister, as nearly a quarter of a century before he had been to his incomparable champion Joan, seized all his property, distributed it amongst these slanderous witnesses, and, appointing them to be his judges, allowed him to be condemned unheard, and banished from the kingdom.

The condemnation of Jacques Cœur took place in the same year that the conquest of Guienne was completed, 1453. And now Charles seemed to lose all his energy. He left the work of government to others; secluded himself in his palace with his unworthy favourites, male and female, and sank back into his old habits of idleness and debauchery. The latter years of his reign were embittered by the irreconcilable distrust and enmity which divided himself and his eldest son. The Dauphin, one of the most acute, artful, and ruthless princes who ever lived, had never been on very cordial terms with his father. He now lived apart in his own principality of Dauphiné, ruling it like an independent sovereign. His first wife, Margaret of Scotland, being dead, he espoused Charlotte of Savoy, much against his father's will.

The king required him to come and give an account of his conduct. Louis replied that he could not trust himself at court, where Dammartin, whom he knew to be his enemy, was all-powerful. Charles insisted, but the Dauphin, having first collected troops with the intention of open resistance, and then despaired of making head against



the royal power, fled for refuge to the duke of Burgundy. The duke declined to take any part in the quarrel between the son and the father ; but granted the prince hospitable and even munificent entertainment, and the Castle of Genappe, near Brussels, for a secure abode.

The king took possession of Dauphiné, uniting it to the Crown domains, but no accession of lands or revenues could give him any comfort now. He became persuaded that his son had spies and emissaries amongst the servants of his palace and household, bribed to compass his death ; and dreading to touch food lest he should be poisoned, afflicted likewise with a disease which rendered eating painful, the wretched father obstinately refused all nourishment, and died of starvation in his 58th year, July, 1461.

Charles VII. is honourably distinguished by his care for the independence of the national Church. "The Grand Assembly, which fixed the liberties of the Gallican Church, was held in the city of Bourges in the year 1438. It was convoked by the king, who presided in person ; it was thronged by his most illustrious subjects, secular as well as ecclesiastic ; and it was attended by the authorized legates, both of the Pope Eugenius IV. and of the Council of Basle, which was then sitting. The result of their deliberations was the celebrated Pragmatic Sanction,\* the great bulwark of the national Church against the usurpations of Rome, to which French divines in subsequent ages clung tenaciously, even after it had been betrayed to the enemy by an interested monarch.

The Gallican liberties embraced a number of particular provisions, but were founded on two grand principles, viz., "(1.) That the Pope has no authority in the kingdom of France over anything concerning things temporal. (2.) That, though the Pope is acknowledged as sovereign lord

\* "*Pragmatic Sanction* was a general term for all important ordinances of church or state—those, perhaps, more properly, which were enacted in public assemblies, with the counsel of eminent juriconsults or *Pragmatici*."

in things spiritual, his power even in respect of these is controlled and limited by the canons and regulations of the ancient councils of the Church received in this kingdom."

*Note concerning French taxation.*

Previously to the reign of Charles VII. the kings of France had no certain revenue, excepting the feudal dues levied in the domains of the Crown. Occasionally they supplied their need of money by obtaining from the States-general a vote of taxes on income, or property, or of duties to be levied on the sale of goods or provisions. But, in 1439, Charles VII. instituted a perpetual yearly tallage, or property-tax, which was levied on commoners of every degree, but not on persons of noble birth. It had the name of tallage (Fr. *taille*), because the accounts were kept by means of wooden tallies (Fr. *entailles*). Henceforward there were four principal branches of public revenue in France; viz., the Tallage; the *Aids*, or indirect taxes of all kinds; the *Gabelle*, or salt-duty; the revenue of the Crown lands.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Reign of Louis XI.—Great Feudal Houses of France.—The King's Character and Government.—League of the Public Good.—Charles the Bold.—Louis at Peronne.—His remorseless Policy, and Acquisitions of Territory.—His closing Days.—Improvements effected in the Kingdom by Louis XI.

FROM 1461 A.D. TO 1483.

THE reign of Louis XI. occupies a very special place in the history of France. It was the rest and breathing-time between the conclusion of the eighty years' war with England and the commencement of sixty years' war with Italy. This period of repose was improved by a king of great energy and unequalled state-craft, to concentrate the strength of the kingdom, and gather into one the great divisions of the territory of France.

The ancient feudal houses of France had well-nigh perished, cut off on many a bloody field of battle; but a new feudal aristocracy, equally independent of the Crown, equally formidable to it, had been raised up by the assignment of great territorial fiefs to princes of the blood royal. Thus in the last two reigns it had been proved that the duke of Burgundy could almost dispose of the crown of France, whether in allying himself to a foreign prince, or in dissolving that alliance; and the princely houses of Anjou and Brittany, as well as that of Burgundy, rivalled the throne in power and in splendour. The duke of Burgundy, indeed, possessing the Netherlands as well as great territories in France, was the richest prince in Europe. The house of Anjou, which had acquired Lorraine by marriage, possessed also Provence in the south and Maine in the north. The duke of Bourbon was master of a large territory in the middle of

France. The dukes of Orleans and Alençon had likewise important possessions.

The chief aim and work of Louis XI. was to depress, and as far as he could to destroy, the power and greatness of these princely families; and by the various means of confiscations, treaties, and inheritance, he accomplished that object in regard to most of them.

He came to the throne at the age of thirty-eight, in the full maturity of his years and faculties. Since the days of his ancestor, St. Louis, he was the first king of France (says an eminent writer) who had studied the *science* of government. But the sentiments which the latter Louis had derived from the study, were as different from those of his saintly predecessor, as the spirit in which he had pursued it. "Men were in his eyes the materials on which his skill was to be employed, not brethren of whose good or evil fortune he must be a partaker." "He who knows not how to dissemble knows not how to reign," was the leading maxim of his policy. And never, surely, has history exhibited a more remarkable compound of mean cunning and overreaching, with a frank and candid demeanour; of audacity and caution, called in by turns to cajole or to intimidate; of feline softness with ruthless cruelty: of the most grovelling superstition with an utter disregard of all moral obligations; than that which was presented in the life and actions of Louis XI. But the incidents which developed and illustrated this strange and repulsive character, belong to history of a more minute and biographical description than these brief annals of France: all that space admits of here is an account of the chief acts of his government.

As soon as the tidings of his father's death reached him, Louis hastened from his asylum in the Netherlands to Rheims. His friendly protector, Philip of Burgundy, met him by the way with a body of troops, aware that during the last years of Charles VII. Louis had had many enemies in his father's court, who had plotted to disinherit him of the kingdom. Thus attended, the new

king reached the place of consecration, and received the crown. But no armed defenders were necessary. "The enemies of the *heir-apparent* were all loyal, not to say obsequious, subjects of the *king*. The rights of primogeniture were too well settled, the risk of attempting a change in the succession too great; and all that the plotters could hope for was, that their past inimical designs might be forgotten in the present fervour of their allegiance. The duke of Burgundy himself, anxious to promote peace, knelt before Louis when the coronation banquet was concluded, and besought him to forgive those of his father's counsellors and friends who were supposed to have done him wrong. Louis consented. He could not do otherwise at such a moment, and when the request came from the lips of so generous a benefactor, without considerable diminution of dignity. But he who never trusted a friend, never forgave an enemy. He could afford to wait, 'for he accounted (says a great French author) the beginning of his reign to be the beginning of his revenge.'"

He thought it necessary, however, to obtain popular support, and set out by promising a large reduction of taxes, and frequent conventions of the States-general to regulate and control the expenditure of the public money. But although frugal to homeliness in his personal expenditure, he bestowed so much money in bribing men whose adherence he desired to gain, and so much more in maintaining spies and household traitors in every foreign court, and amongst the servants and retainers of every prince and powerful man in France, that his treasury constantly required replenishing. The taxes were rendered heavier instead of lighter; and the States-general were no more mentioned. Some revolts broke out, but they were quickly stifled; men were already in awe of this king, whose vengeance approached offenders so noiselessly, yet fell on them with such crushing weight.

He had not been king many weeks before he began to

reverse the acts of his father's government ; the *Pragmatic Sanction* especially, which he abolished, it was thought, out of sheer hatred to the work of Charles VII., for at the close of his reign he re-enacted the principal articles of that ordinance. Another measure, of little seeming importance, irritated the aristocracy extremely. Louis, who was fond of the chase, forbade any one to hunt in the forests belonging to the Crown ; and this restraint of their former liberty being followed by other restrictions, all tending to prevent the great lords and princes of the blood from encroaching either on the royal authority or the royal revenue, they were provoked to form a conspiracy, which they called the League of the Public Good, but the real object of which was to divide the power among themselves. Louis's brother, Charles, duke of Berri, the dukes of Orleans, Brittany, Bourbon, the famous captains of the last reign, Dunois and the count de St. Pol, together with the counsellors who had possessed the confidence of Charles VII., but whom Louis had deprived of office, were all included in this confederacy ; together with numerous lesser lords, and with the great Gascon nobles, d'Armagnac, de Foix, and others, whose object, however, was not so purely selfish as that of their fellow-leaguers, since they contemplated the restoration of the ancient national independence of their land, as well as their own aggrandizement.

The strength of the league lay, above all, in Charles, count of Charolais, the son of the good duke Philip of Burgundy, who was now disabled by infirmity from taking any part in public affairs, or imposing any restraint on his son's proceedings. Louis's own tortuous policy had turned Charles, a hot-headed but not ungenerous prince, who had been his companion and friend during his years of exile from his father's kingdom, into a formidable enemy. Always suspicious of evil, the king, dreading lest his two most powerful neighbours, the duke of Brittany and the count of Charolais, should ever combine against him, had endeavoured to set them at enmity, by secretly



leading each to expect the government of Normandy, an office of great authority and dignity, which he knew would be particularly acceptable to either of those princes. But his perfidious design was discovered by them ; and the resentment of Charolais was the deeper, because Louis in the day of his adversity had been loaded with benefits by the Burgundian court.

Having abundance of men and money at command, he led the hostilities of the associated princes ; and a confused but murderous engagement at Montlhéry, in which Louis abandoned to him the field of battle, was soon followed by risings in all the principal towns of Normandy.

Overmatched in arms, Louis had recourse to those weapons of cunning and state craft in the use of which he excelled all other men. He disarmed the resentment of Charolais by seeking a personal interview, and proposing an accommodation of their differences with the utmost seeming cordiality and good humour. Others of the confederates he flattered and amused with promises of domains and dignities, adding some present gifts as pledges of his good-will and liberal intentions. The princes received important accessions of territory. The Breton duke was set free from all the restraints which had prevented him from acting as an independent sovereign. Normandy was assigned to the king's brother and his heirs for ever. By the treaty of Conflans (October, 1465), all these gifts and engagements were confirmed ; and the confederates went each his own way to enjoy the spoil he had gained, without further mention of the "public good" which had been the professed object of their league.

As soon as he had compassed the dissolution of the confederacy, the king's next thought was which of its members he should attack first. His brother was the most defenceless ; and Louis, alleging that he could not dispose of so important a portion of his kingdom without the sanction of the nation, convoked an assembly of the

States-general, and desired them to assist him with their advice. By means of the secret agency which he maintained everywhere, he had so directed the election of the deputies that the assembly should prove the docile instrument of his will; and his chancellor, in the speech with which he opened their proceedings, recalled to them the words addressed by Israel to Joshua as the model of the answer which the States should return to their king: "All that thou commandest us we will do. . . . Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment . . . he shall be put to death."

Never in fact were the States more servile. They deprecated in the strongest terms the cession of Normandy; desired that the duke of Brittany should be made to give up the cities of which he had possessed himself; that other grants made by the king should be resumed, &c., &c. This was all that Louis desired. Having obtained it, he hastened to dismiss the Assembly, which had only been in session eight days: and lest any future meeting of the States should prove less subservient to his will, he never again convoked them during his reign.

His brother Charles was immediately stripped of Normandy; Brittany was invaded, and terrified into submission by the promptitude and severity of the king's measures. But the count of Charolais, now become duke of Burgundy by his father's death, and to be known henceforward in history as *Charles the Bold*, or *Charles the Rash* (which latter title is especially applicable to him), was an enemy who could neither be intimidated nor vanquished so easily. Louis tried to overcome him by secretly stirring up revolt in the duke's Flemish dominions. The burghers of the great cities, jealous of their liberties, had been deeply offended by the violence and arrogance of Charles. Liège, especially, was in a state of irritation easily aggravated into open tumult and insurrection by the emissaries of France. Before the revolt actually broke out, however, Louis, afraid that the duke, who had just married the sister of Edward IV., would make war

against him with the combined strength of England and Burgundy, resolved once more to try the effect of his persuasive tongue and consummate address, in a personal conference with Charles. He proposed therefore to pay the duke a visit at his city of Peronne, if his host would give him a safe-conduct. Burgundy hesitated, saying that his army was mustered ready for action, and he would rather fight out his quarrel with the king, than parley with him about terms of peace; but Louis repeating and pressing his request earnestly, the duke gave way, and the king ventured to Peronne with a handful of attendants.

He was signally caught in his own net. Scarcely had he arrived at Peronne, when the duke received notice that Liège was in open rebellion, confident of support from the king of France, whose agents, it was proved, had been busily fomenting disaffection among the citizens. Charles's wrath was terrible. His treacherous rival was in his power, and could hardly claim liberty on the score of honour and good faith. Men who had reasons of their own for hating Louis were in the duke's council, and urged perpetual imprisonment at the least, as a fitting retribution for aggravated, persistent perfidy. For a short time the life of the king trembled in the balance. But the anger of Charles, though furious, was seldom lasting; and when the first heat of passion was over, counsellors of more generosity, or more prudence, prevailed with him. He allowed his prisoner to justify himself, and Louis, improving the opportunity with wonderful address, and consenting to every condition which the duke imposed, not only escaped from durance, but was once more permitted to sign a treaty of alliance and friendship with Burgundy. To give greater assurance of his sincerity, he swore to observe it over the cross of St. Lô, a relic which he believed was made of the wood of the true cross; for it was generally understood that unless bound to perform his engagements by the awe and dread he had of this relic, Louis would keep no promise or oath longer than it suited him to do so.

One condition of the treaty was that the duke of Burgundy should henceforward hold his French territories in full sovereignty, not as a vassal of the Crown ; another, that since the king had deprived his brother of Normandy, he should bestow on him Champagne and Brie ; a third, and the most humbling of all, that he should at once accompany the duke and his army to Liège, to witness the chastisement of the citizens whom his own crafty policy had stirred to revolt. Thither, accordingly, he went ; heard the Liégeois meet the assault of the Burgundians with the cry of " France for ever ! " " The king for ever ! " Saw the rich, populous city stormed and sacked by 40,000 infuriated soldiers ; and while the horrible work of bloodshed and ruin was consummated, congratulated the duke on his frightful victory, and accompanied him to the cathedral to give thanks to Almighty God for the overthrow of his rebellious subjects (1468).

But not even the cross of St. Lô could hold Louis to the other portion of his engagements. Fresh instances of faithlessness led to fresh quarrels and wars, in which the king repeatedly saw himself exposed to great danger, yet always escaped ; penetrating with rare insight into the characters of the men with whom he had to deal, and taking advantage of their faults and follies to work out his own schemes with unscrupulous dexterity. His brother he had persuaded to accept Guienne, instead of the provinces allotted to him by the treaty of Peronne, the possession of which would have brought him into the closest neighbourhood with Burgundy. But in 1472, the prince died of a lingering illness, the effect, men said, of poison administered to him by the contrivance of the king. Whether this were so or not, Louis did not conceal his joy when he heard that his brother was dying ; and the duke of Burgundy, openly proclaiming him a murderer, rushed to arms to avenge the prince his friend, to whom he had promised in marriage his only child and heiress. Much bloodshed, but no decisive action, marked

this war,—in which most of the chiefs who had formerly leagued together against the king were engaged, and in which they had called to their aid Edward IV. Louis, by large gifts, secretly gained over Edward's chief confidants, and found no difficulty in engaging their master to conclude a treaty, which assured to him an immediate payment of 75,000 crowns, and a yearly pension of 60,000, until his eldest daughter and the Dauphin should be of an age to marry; a union which Louis, while proposing it, most probably never intended should take place, but the prospect of which greatly flattered Edward, and still more his queen.

But through all wars and negotiations, the king was steadily pursuing his two main objects,—to be revenged on all his enemies, and to aggrandise his crown and kingdom. He succeeded greatly in both. The Count de St. Pol perished on the scaffold; the duke of Alençon in prison; the son of the latter was first entrapped into a correspondence which might be construed into treason, and then executed for it. Against Armagnac, the most powerful of the southern chiefs, whose private life was bad enough to stifle the pity men might otherwise have felt for him, Louis let loose a furious inquisitor-bishop and cardinal, Goffredi, who besieged him in his city of Lectoure, till the count surrendered on promise of safety, and was immediately put to the sword by the cardinal. His wife, who had witnessed her husband's murder, was forced to drink poison; and the whole population of Lectoure, old and young, were slaughtered, after which the city was given over to the flames. The duke de Nemours, a younger branch of the Armagnacs, who had likewise leagued against him, was miserably imprisoned and tortured by orders of the relentless king; and when brought to the scaffold, his children were placed beneath it, that their father's blood might fall on them.

Roussillon and Cerdagne he had acquired by treaty from the king of Aragon; Anjou he had seized: Provence and Maine he inherited. But his most valuable acquisi-



tions were made on the side of Burgundy. Charles the Rash, to whom war was a pastime, and who was moreover desirous to enlarge his dominions by encroaching on Lorraine and Switzerland, provoked the Swiss to war. The valour and patriotism of the hardy mountaineers prevailed even against the long-tried and splendidly-equipped Burgundian troops. They gave the duke a severe check at Neuss; won two great victories over him at Granson and Morat (March and June, 1476); and in January, 1477, routed him again on the field of Nanci, where he perished,—much to the relief of Switzerland; and no less to the joy of Louis, who immediately seized all the valuable French territories pertaining to the duke, while he opened negotiations for a marriage between his only child and heiress, Mary of Burgundy, and the Dauphin. Mary was twenty years of age, the Dauphin only eight; and the heiress of Burgundy had numerous suitors of mature age; for her hand, conveying with it all the dominions of her father (the Salic law having no force in Burgundy), was the richest prize in Europe.

Louis might, however, have gained his end; but his treachery in fomenting enmity between the states of Flanders and the princess, for his own advantage, so disgusted her, that she bestowed herself and her heritage on Maximilian of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederic III. This marriage was one of historical importance. The son of Mary and Maximilian was united some twenty years afterwards to the heiress of Castile and Aragon, and his son, the famous Emperor Charles V., uniting in himself the sovereignty of Spain, the Netherlands, and the empire, was to become the most formidable enemy of France, and to overshadow all the monarchies of Europe with the power and splendour of his throne.

But though France had lost Flanders, she retained her hold on Burgundy, Ponthieu, and the strong cities commanding the course of the river Somme. Maximilian went to war to recover these, but after a wearisome indecisive struggle, all parties consented to an accom-



modation, and the French provinces were from this time inseparably annexed to the kingdom (Dec. 1482). Freed henceforward from most of the cares of state which had been his daily and nightly meditation for twenty years, the king was none the more cheerful, or the more merciful. He saw an enemy approaching whom he could neither bribe, nor cajole, nor intimidate. Death drew nigh; and the unhappy man trembled with abject terror at the thought of his coming.

Hidden in the recesses of his castle of Plessis-les-Tours, he scarcely ventured out to take the air in the castle court, or admitted his own family into his presence; always tormented with fear, and constantly changing even the servants who waited on him, lest some household traitor should be lurking in their ranks, ready to hasten for him the inevitable end. Every approach to the castle was defended by drawbridges, gratings, spikes, like the gloomiest state prison. The archers of the Scottish guard kept watch on the walls, ready to shoot down every one who ventured within range of their arrows. The "*grand-provost*," or chief hangman, Messire Tristan l'Ermite, whom Louis was wont to call his "comrade," his "good friend and gossip," prowled about perpetually. Suspected persons were hanged or drowned at once, without form of trial; and corpses dangling from the trees of the park tainted the air, and warned the traveller from the spot. Meanwhile the king was multiplying devotions, enriching churches with the money he had wrung by hard taxation, procuring relics from every quarter at great cost, and beseeching all the saints in heaven to prolong his life; the Virgin especially, who was the chief object of his worship, and whom he created *countess of Boulogne*! never failing, it is said, to implore her succour when he was about to commit some cruel or perfidious deed. His dress was garnished with little leaden images of saints, which he seems to have regarded as amulets, or charms; and his physician, having cunningly persuaded him that their deaths would be separated

only by a week, became the object of his master's most solicitous attention. Hermitages were erected near the castle, and solitaries of great fame for piety were invited from Lombardy and Calabria to dwell there, that they might repay the royal bounty by their continual intercessions. But all was of no avail. On the 30th August, 1483, Louis XI. breathed his last ; and a great burden of fear and gloom was lifted from the hearts of thousands. He was sixty years of age, and had reigned twenty-two years.

This king, say French historians, long endeavoured to gain the favour of the people by the homeliness and simplicity of his dress and manners, and the familiar intercourse to which he admitted men of low estate ; but he was more hated than any of his contemporaries. Not, perhaps, that they were less cruel, but their cruelty was that of unreasoning, passionate men, whereas the inhumanity of Louis was the result of cool calculation, devising atrocious actions long beforehand, and carrying them deliberately through without misgiving or relenting. One of the special inventions in which he took pleasure was an iron cage for the confinement of prisoners, made of such size and shape that the miserable captive whom it contained should be unable to find rest in any position. It is satisfactory to remember that the favourite who suggested these cage-prisons, a man whom he had raised from obscurity to high estate, was himself condemned to inhabit one. In general, all the agents and ministers whom he employed were men of mean condition, who could be used as instruments without being admitted to confidence. His barber, Oliver (commonly surnamed *Oliver the Devil*), was one of these ; and under the title of Count de Meulan was actually sent with a very pompous suite on an important embassy.

But with all his faults, Louis XI. rendered great service to the kingdom, in respect of some internal improvements, to which more warlike princes gave no heed. He was eagerly inquisitive about mercantile affairs,

habitually consulting and conversing with traders and mechanics, and busying himself about mines and manufactures, shipping, markets, &c. He tried to establish uniformity of weights and measures throughout the kingdom; instituted a system of posts, by appointing on all the great lines of road couriers, whose only business was to transmit tidings of public affairs to the king, and to convey his orders; brought skilful workmen from Italy to found the first silk manufactures in France, and encouraged merchants from various countries to frequent the great fairs of the kingdom, and stimulate the commercial industry of his subjects. He also decreed that magistrates should not be removable from office, which contributed to the more free and equitable administration of the laws, though for his own purposes Louis never hesitated to interfere with the course of justice.

He opened the schools of law and medicine, and welcomed the new invention of printing, causing the first printing press set up in France to be established at the Sorbonne. Yet he condemned his only son and heir to ignorance, from a jealous fear (it is said) that knowledge might give him power to unsettle his father's throne, and kept him at a distance from the court. The prince was, however, only thirteen when his father died, too young to be capable of any movement which could justly occasion umbrage.

It is worthy of notice that the subtle, successful policy of Louis so won the admiration of the favourite counsellor of the duke of Burgundy, Philip de Comines, that he forsook his master's service to pass into that of the king of France. The memoirs of Comines, which contain the history of his own times from 1464 to the close of the century, are one of the most valuable works of that day.

Louis XI. was the first king of France who habitually assumed the title of "Most Christian," borne after him by his successors in the monarchy. Besides his son Charles, he left two daughters; Anne, "the lady of Beaujeu," whom he had married to the brother and heir of

the duke of Bourbon, a princess who resembled her father in ability, though of a much more amiable character ; and Jane, who had always been an object of aversion to her father, on account of her personal deformity. From motives of state policy, he had nevertheless insisted on marrying her to the first prince of the blood, Louis of Orleans, a gay, gallant, and accomplished young man, who treated the wife thus forced upon him with utter indifference.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Charles VIII.—Regency of Anne de Beaujeu: the States-General of 1484: Revolt of the Princes.—Charles marries the Heiress of Brittany: his Italian Expedition, and its Issue.—Early Decline and Death of the King.

FROM 1483 A.D. TO 1498.

CHARLES VIII. had spent several of his early years in sickness and solitude at the castle of Amboise. Disease had disfigured and deformed his body, and the ignorance and neglect to which his father had condemned him had so far enfeebled his mind that he could fix his attention on nothing. When near his end, Louis XI. had especially committed the charge of the prince to his eldest daughter and her husband, the sire de Beaujeu; and Charles, feeling more and more as he grew up his deficiency of understanding and knowledge, continued long under the tutelage of his sister, though by the law of France he was major at his father's death, having then entered his fourteenth year.

Anne de Beaujeu, taking advantage of the influence which the guardianship of her brother gave her, possessed herself of the supreme authority, and for several years was to all intents and purposes queen of France. But she encountered, at the outset, a strenuous resistance both from her husband's brother, the duke of Bourbon, and from the duke of Orleans, and the count of Clermont, all three princes of the blood royal, and chiefs of a numerous following, who had hoped, now that the terrible king was dead, and the sceptre had fallen into the feeble hands of a child, they should be able to reverse the policy of the last reign, and re-establish the feudal power and authority

which Louis XI. had endeavoured to annihilate. To put an end to rivalries and disputes which threatened disturbance to the kingdom, it was resolved to convene the States-general; and the most brilliant convention of the national representatives which France had yet seen met in the episcopal palace at Tours, January, 1484. They had been elected with great unanimity; nobles, clergy, and commoners all joining together in their several districts to choose fit deputies to represent them. And they spoke with much sense and spirit; laying their hands on every abuse of the government, pointing out all the reforms which were required, and asserting the right of the States alone (as representing the nation) to dispose of the royal authority in case of the incapacity of the reigning monarch; and also to impose taxes on the people. They granted the king money for the payment of the army, and other expenses of the state, for two years only; desiring that at the end of that time he would again convene the States, since no taxes could be lawfully imposed without their consent. When it was debated who should be regent during the youth of the king, some deputies began to speak of the regency as belonging of right to the princes of the blood; but a speaker from Burgundy rose up and said boldly, that the laws of France gave them no such right; adding, "Above all things, be assured that to the people, and to them alone, it belongs to determine any question affecting the welfare of the commonwealth at large; that the government of it has been confided to our kings by the people; and that they who have possessed themselves of that power by any other means than the consent of the people, are nothing else than tyrants and usurpers. It being evident that our king is unable to govern the state in his own person, the government of it reverts to the people. . . . And by *the people*, I do not mean the populace, or merely the commons of the realm, but *all* Frenchmen of every condition."

The States, however, decided that the young king was competent to transact public business, so long as he acted



in conformity with the advice of his council; but they desired that the king and the princes would select twelve additional councillors from the members of the States. The duke of Orleans, as being the presumptive heir to the throne, was to take the highest place in the council, and after him the duke de Bourbon and the sire de Beaujeu. Thus, after having announced that the whole sovereign power was their own (as representing the nation), they nevertheless abandoned themselves and the kingdom to the guidance of chance, by remitting that power into the hands of a child, without appointing for him a regent or a tutor, or taking any security that the condition they had made respecting the appointment of councillors should be faithfully observed. As on some former occasions, so now, the States *spoke* well, asserting principles which, if acted upon, would have gone far to secure to France free and equitable government, but their proceedings all ended in *talk*.

Some of the reforms they required were promised by the court. To their demand that no duties or taxes should be levied without their consent, and that they should be again convened within two years, no answer whatever was given. And, in fact, not a promise was kept, not a petition granted. The young duke of Orleans, who was always far more occupied with his pleasures than with business, was soon quietly superseded in the royal council by Anne of Beaujeu. The wisdom and vigour of her rule made the people forget that she had usurped it. No further mention was made of the States, or of the rights which they had claimed. As soon as the royal treasury needed replenishing, Anne issued ordinances in the king's name, commanding the continued exaction of the taxes which the States had granted for a short time; and required the Parliament of Paris to register these ordinances, thereby giving them the force of law. The judges obeyed immediately.

The princes, however, and many of the chief lords, though perfectly indifferent to the national rights and

liberties, chafed at the domination of a woman. They formed a league against Anne, with the duke of Brittany, with Richard III. of England, and with Maximilian of Austria. But Anne, allying herself with a powerful faction in Brittany, who were in revolt against their duke, with the Flemings, who were discontented with Maximilian, and with Henry of Richmond, who was on the point of contesting the throne with Richard, disconcerted their plots; and the contest was terminated in 1487, by a complete victory over the army of the confederates, in which the duke of Orleans and several other leaders were made prisoners. Orleans was retained in confinement; the chiefs of inferior rank were executed. The duke of Bourbon was dead; the lord of Beaujeu had inherited his title, and all his possessions. Anne, now duchess of Bourbon, ruled henceforward with uncontested power.

She had long had in view the union of Brittany to the Crown; a design than which none could be more useful to the kingdom, often endangered by the independence of that great fief. The last duke, Francis II., died in 1488, leaving two daughters, the eldest of whom, a child about nine years old, was his successor. Charles VIII., as suzerain of Brittany, claimed the guardianship of the little duchess. The Bretons demurred, and several princes and powerful lords beginning to contend for the hand of this child, the duchy was rent by factions, who called in foreign aid from Spain, England, &c. Wearied with the disputes and importunities of rival pretenders, the young Anne of Brittany consented to marry Maximilian of Austria, who much desired to unite that important province to the territories he had secured by his former marriage with Mary of Burgundy. Mary had died at the end of a few years, and her only daughter, Margaret, had been betrothed in early infancy to Charles VIII., and brought up at the French court.

The marriage of Maximilian with the Duchess Anne took place by proxy; nor did he show any great desire to see his bride, who was a stranger to him, and whom he

left to take care of herself even when her territory was invaded, being indeed far away, busy with his own affairs in Hungary. Under these circumstances, the young king of France by a bold stroke secured the little lady and her duchy for himself. He had already, in the course of hostilities raised by the Breton faction, obtained possession of Nantes, and other places. He now surprised and captured Rennes, where the Duchess Anne was residing; made his suit to her, and was accepted: notwithstanding his betrothal, years before, to the daughter of the very prince whom he was now depriving of his wife. The little Margaret of Burgundy was eleven years old; the duchess of Brittany thirteen; the former was returned to her father, and Charles espoused the latter, in 1491, the Church annulling all preceding marriage engagements. Fortunately for the peace of France, Maximilian took quietly the affront which had been put upon him; and Brittany (stipulating, however, that its special rights and privileges should not be infringed) became united to the French crown.

Charles was no longer reigning in tutelage. The duchess of Bourbon had retired from participation in state affairs, and the young king was free to follow his own inclinations. His first act was to set the duke of Orleans free from confinement, and to lavish on him marks of affection and confidence, in the generous desire to make up for the restraint to which he had been subjected. His next thought was how best he could indulge his passion for chivalrous adventures; for Charles, notwithstanding his sickly health and deformed person, had found no reading or amusement so congenial to his taste, as tales of ancient knights and romantic exploits, and the exercises of the tilt and the tournament. He thirsted to follow the example of Charlemagne; meditated the conquest of Constantinople; but was contented to begin with that of Italy.

Italy had long inflamed the cupidity of the French. The successive pretensions of two houses of Anjou had,

in every generation since St. Louis, called swarms of French or Provençal adventurers into that beautiful country. Those who did not perish there returned clad in the fine armour of Lombardy, or the rich stuffs of Florence, vaunting the enjoyments of a softer climate, the luxury and the beauty of the sunny South. It seemed that Italy would be an easy prey, divided and torn as she had been by factions and civil wars. Venice alone, with her 3,000 ships, her well-paid, well-disciplined army of condottieri, her flourishing industry, and the iron constitution which insured her independence of a foreign yoke, remained secure and formidable, stretching her borders from the frontiers of Carniola to those of Switzerland.

Charles prepared for the invasion of Italy by purchasing a continuance of peace with his neighbours. To Maximilian he surrendered Franche Comté and Artois. To Ferdinand of Aragon he gave up Roussillon and Cerdagne. Henry VII., who had entered France and laid siege to Boulogne (in revenge for some countenance afforded by Charles to Perkin Warbeck), the king persuaded to retire, by acknowledging himself indebted to him in the sum of 745,000 crowns of gold, to be paid in fifteen years. And all things being now ready, he crossed the Alps in August, 1494, with an army of thirty thousand men, accompanied by the best artillery in Europe. There was not much honour to be gained by the expedition. Charles had an ally in Lombardy, and, excepting for the resistance of a few towns in the Florentine territory, which the Swiss mercenaries punished by the horrible butchery of all the inhabitants of those places, the French had scarcely occasion to draw the sword. Charles frightened the Pope, Alexander VI., into the Castle of St. Angelo, passed through Rome, and entered Naples in triumph. The king of Naples, an Aragonese prince, betrayed by his own general, took flight, and Charles, supposing that the kingdom was conquered, abandoned himself to ease and pleasure.

“Soon, however, the national spirit revived. Venice became the centre of a formidable confederacy, which included Maximilian, now become emperor of Germany, and Ferdinand of Aragon, both dreading the aggrandizement of France. The Neapolitans, and the Italian cities generally, longed for the expulsion of the strangers, who took no pains to conciliate their good-will, and manifested an insatiable appetite for plunder.” While the storm was gathering, Charles lingered in the south, hoping to obtain the investiture of the crown of Naples from the Pope; but Alexander was resolute in withholding it, and it became necessary for the invaders to retreat at once, if they would do so with safety.

Near Fornova, at the passage of the Taro, Charles was attacked by the combined Italian army, under Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua (6th July, 1495). He was at the time in full march, the divisions of his army were scattered, and the whole together much inferior in number to their assailants. For a time the French king was in great danger; but the impetuous valour of the French cavalry, supported by the obstinate hardihood of their Swiss auxiliaries, triumphed. They gave no quarter, and Gonzaga withdrew, leaving between three and four thousand dead men on the battle-field.

This victory secured Charles a safe passage into his own kingdom, but he loitered some months at Turin, feasting and indulging himself in the guilty pleasures which he loved, while his soldiers straggled back towards France, sick and weary. He had left half his army at Naples, under command of his kinsman, Gilbert de Montpensier. But Montpensier was opposed by “*the great captain*” of that age, Gonzalvo of Cordova, the conqueror of Grenada, whom Ferdinand of Aragon had sent with a Spanish army to relieve the dethroned king of Naples. After vainly waiting for reinforcements from France, Montpensier was compelled to yield his last fortress, Atella (July, 1496); 5,000 Frenchmen laid down their arms, but were detained in Italy, till sickness



had made such havoc among them, that a miserable remnant of five hundred alone survived, to make their way across the Alps.

Charles, who had returned to France in October, 1495, lived little more than two years afterwards. His counsellors were divided as to the policy of another expedition into Italy, and the king himself gave little heed to their opinions; but went from place to place, to preside or to tilt at tournaments, and seemed to think of nothing else. Towards the end of his life, however, he entered on a wiser course. Three sons in succession had died in infancy, and at twenty-seven, Charles was childless, with his health so undermined by guilty excesses that his life seemed already to be fading away. He began to think that his sons had been taken from him as a chastisement, put away his vices, endeavoured to lighten the burdens of his people, and to redress their wrongs. But the time was past. Going through a low doorway, he received a slight blow on the head; it was followed by a fit, and at twenty-eight Charles sank into the grave (7th April, 1498). "I think verily," says Philip de Comines, "that word was never spoken by him to wound any living man;" of so gentle and kindly a disposition was he by nature. But the neglect of all good training in his childhood had borne bitter fruit in his after-life.

He had a taste for the arts, and brought painters and sculptors from Italy. Some of his followers also brought back from Italy plants of the mulberry, and attempted the culture of silk near Montelimart, on the Rhone.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Louis XII.: his Marriage to the widowed Queen Anne: Equity and Humanity of his Domestic Administration: his Italian Wars: Subjugation of the Milanese, 1500: Iniquitous Spoliation of Frederic of Naples.—Aggressions on Genoa, and on Venice, 1509.—“The Holy League.”—Gaston de Foix.—Battle of the Spurs, 1513.—Louis marries Mary of England, 1514.—His Death, 1515.—End of the Feudal Period.

FROM 1498 A.D. TO 1515.

LOUIS, duke of Orleans, the grandson of a brother of Charles VI., was the nearest kinsman and successor of the deceased king. The domain of the house of Orleans, which his accession restored to the Crown, consisted of the duchy of Orleans and the counties of Blois and Valois. Valois he bestowed on his cousin, Francis of Angoulême, who eventually became his successor.

The widowed queen, Anne of Brittany, had retired into her own duchy immediately on her husband's death, and was in full exercise of her sovereign rights there, issuing proclamations, coining money, &c. That important province seemed likely to escape from the French crown after all; but Louis resolved to marry its possessor himself. His wife, the Princess Jane, whom Louis XI. had forced him to marry when a boy of sixteen, was a pious, gentle woman, but she had never possessed the affection of her husband. There was, however, no legal pretext for soliciting a divorce; but the judges, willing to please their new king, gave sentence as he desired; and Louis obtained a dispensation to marry Anne of Brittany from Pope Alexander VI., by promising the duchy of Valentinois to his son, the infamous Cesar Borgia.

Anne was still in the prime of her youth, and very

handsome ; she graced the throne, and coveted it. But she reserved with care the separate rights of her hereditary dominions ; and it was provided that Brittany should only be united to the crown during the king's life, and should be inherited by Anne's second child, or, if she had no second child, by her nearest heir. The accession of Louis had not been hailed with much pleasure by the best men of France. "He had hitherto done little to make him respected. But the *king* proved better than the *duke*. His old quarrels were forgotten, wise counsellors were chosen, and the morals of the court were purified ;" Queen Anne, however desirous to effect that change, having been able to do little or nothing towards it during the reign of her former husband, whose habits and example fostered the evil she wished to extirpate. Louis was honestly desirous to relieve his people from the weight of taxation which oppressed them, and put a stop to the reckless profusion in which it had become the habit to indulge. Payments regularly made from the royal treasury, salaries and pensions no longer in arrear, were so great a novelty, that men talked with a mixture of wonder and approval of the king being as honest and punctual in his dealings as the most trustworthy merchant in France. At the same time, the terrible grievance of pillage by the soldiery was put down. Notwithstanding the measures which had been taken to that end in the reign of Charles VII., the evil had revived again in full force during the numerous intestine conflicts between the malcontent princes and the Crown under Louis XI. ; and in the only assembly of the States-general which had been holden since his death, the commons had complained in simple and pathetic terms, that "during the last thirty-four years the king's troops had been perpetually passing and repassing through every part of France . . . all living upon the poor people. Though hired to prevent oppression, they are themselves the most grievous of all oppressors. The poor labourer must pay for the hire of the man who beats him, who turns him

out of his house, who carries off his substance, and who compels him to lie on the bare earth . . . . so that if God did not comfort the poor man and give him patience, he would fall into utter despair;" with more to the same effect. The unfortunate passion of Charles VIII. for military fame and adventure was more calculated to aggravate than to allay the evil; but his successor, though he, too, caught eagerly at the bait of Italian conquest, was wise enough to heal the plague which wasted his people at home, before he set out to bring unutterable misery on the inhabitants of Lombardy, Naples, and Venetia. The villagers were no longer obliged to flee to their churches for safety whenever troops were quartered near them, and the farmer stored up his corn and fruit, and rejoiced in his harvest, without having to complain that a day's visit from a company of soldiers cost him more than a year's taxes.

Immediately on his accession, Louis had assumed the titles of "king of France, of Jerusalem, of the Two Sicilies, and duke of Milan," that Europe might be in no doubt respecting his pretensions to Italy. He claimed to be the legitimate heir to the duchy of Milan, in right of his grandmother Valentina Visconti, though, according to the law acknowledged by Italy, females were excluded from all share in the succession; and as soon as he had set the internal affairs of France in order, he hastened to assert his claim by force of arms. The time was favourable, for the Venetians, who were chiefly interested in preserving the independence of the Milanese, had just been forced into a sanguinary expensive war with the Turks, which they were destined to support for seven years; and they dared not enter on another war with the French. In August, 1499, a powerful French army crossed the Alps. They took by assault two small fortified towns on the borders of the Tanaro, and put the garrisons and almost all the inhabitants to the sword; a ferocious proceeding, which so terrified the troops of Ludovico Sforza, the reigning duke of Milan, that they

deserted their standards and dispersed. The duke sought refuge in Germany ; and in twenty days, almost without fighting, the invaders found themselves in possession of the country. Louis entered Milan on the 2nd of October, and was saluted with acclamations by the people, who had no love for Sforza, and hoped to find a more gracious ruler in the French king. But before he returned to France, at the end of the year, the hopes excited by his advent had already given way to hatred of the strangers, whose contempt of their customs, and violation of all the national institutions, joined to the pecuniary burdens which they imposed, rendered the French yoke insupportable.

Sforza was informed of the general ferment, and ventured to return. He was on the Swiss frontier with a considerable treasure ; a brave but disorderly crowd of young men, ready to serve any one for pay, joined him. In a few days, between eight and nine thousand men assembled under his banner, and in February, 1500, he entered Lombardy at their head. Como, Milan, Parma, Pavia, immediately opened their gates to him ; he besieged Novara, which capitulated. In the beginning of April, the French arrived before Novara with a large army, in which were ten thousand Swiss mercenaries. The men of that nation in the two hostile camps, opposed to each other for hire, hesitated, parleyed, and finally agreed upon a transaction of singular baseness. The Swiss under Sforza's banners not only consented to desert him, but to give up to the French the Italian troops with whom they were incorporated, and whom the captors immediately put to the sword or drowned in the river. They also suffered the French to arrest Sforza and his generals, who had disguised themselves and mingled with the soldiers, hoping to escape unnoticed. The duke was sent into France, and rigorously imprisoned during the remainder of his life ; and from this period until June, 1512, the Milanese remained subject to the king of France.

The ease with which Louis had subjugated the duchy of Milan led him to expect that he should not meet with much resistance from the kingdom of Naples. Frederic, the reigning king, who had succeeded to the throne in 1496, was an able and virtuous prince; but he found himself the ruler of a kingdom which had been ruined by war and intestine divisions, without troops or money; and he had, with great difficulty, reduced the disordered state to something like quiet, when he was menaced with the invasion of the French. Willing, for the sake of his subjects, to decline a contest which was probably hopeless, he offered to hold his kingdom in fief, as tributary to France. His kinsman, however, Ferdinand of Aragon, had promised him powerful aid, and as he pretended, had pledged himself to perform that promise by sending into Sicily the best general of Spain, Gonzalvo di Cordova, with sixty ships and a chosen body of infantry. But Ferdinand had previously come to a secret agreement with Louis, to divide between them the spoils of the unhappy Frederic. While the French entered on the north, to conquer the kingdom of Naples, Ferdinand proposed that the Spaniards should enter on the south to defend it; and that, on meeting, they, instead of giving battle, should shake hands on the partition of the kingdom; each remaining master of one-half. This iniquitous bargain was the basis of the secret treaty of Grenada, signed in November, 1500; and in the summer of 1501 all was ready for the execution of the perfidious compact. It was only in character, that Pope Alexander VI. should be a party to such a transaction, and that when the French were about to march in and take possession, he should announce that the king of Naples was dethroned, and his kingdom, as a fief of the Holy See, was bestowed upon the *Most Christian* and *Most Catholic* sovereigns of France and Spain.

The French army arrived at Rome on the 25th June, at the same time that the army of Gonzalvo di Cordova landed in Calabria. The French, from the moment they



passed the frontier, treated the Neapolitans as rebels, and hanged the soldiers who surrendered to them. Arrived before Capua, they entered that city while the magistrates were signing the capitulation, and massacred 7,000 of the inhabitants. Yet the treachery of Ferdinand inspired Frederic with more aversion than even the ferocity of the French, and he yielded himself to Louis, who detained him in France till his death. The Spaniards and French advanced towards each other, without encountering any resistance, and met on the limits which the treaty of Grenada had respectively assigned to them; but the moment the conquest was terminated, jealousy appeared. The French commander and Gonzalvo disputed upon the division of the kingdom, each claiming for his master some province not named in the treaty. From wrangling they proceeded to fighting; and after a year's struggle, in which two famous French captains, La Palisse, and Bayard, the "Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche," first won distinction, the army of Louis was destroyed, and his share in the kingdom of Naples lost. He sent a more powerful army to recover it; but on arriving near Rome, news was received of the death of Alexander VI., and the Cardinal d'Amboise, who was Louis's favourite and prime minister, detained the French force, to support his intrigues in the conclave of cardinals. When the troops recommenced their march, October, 1503, the rainy season had commenced. The Spaniards had taken up their position on the Garigliano, the passage of which they defended amidst inundated plains, with a constancy and patience characteristic of their nation. During more than two months, the French suffered or perished in the marshes; in the last week of December, Gonzalvo crossed the river, and completely destroyed all that remained of them. On the 1st January, 1504, Gaëta, the last place held by the French, surrendered to him; and the whole kingdom of Naples was now, like Sicily, but a Spanish possession.

Baffled in the south, Louis aimed now to extend his



conquests in the north of the peninsula. In September, 1504, he signed another secret treaty at Blois, by which he divided with the Emperor Maximilian the republic of Venice, as he had divided with Ferdinand the kingdom of Naples. Experience ought to have taught him that Maximilian, like Ferdinand, would reserve for himself the conquests made in common. But Louis thought only of the present. Charles, the grandson and heir of Maximilian of Austria and of Ferdinand of Aragon, of Mary of Burgundy and of Isabella of Castile, was already born. It was foreseen that he would probably unite under his sceptre the greatest monarchies in Europe. Louis had lost his sons, but he had a daughter, Claude, who, though she could not succeed to the throne of France, had a splendid dower in the reversion of Brittany; and partly through the influence of his wife, who coveted so illustrious an alliance for her child, he agreed that Claude and Charles should be betrothed; a union which, had it taken place, would have brought that powerful prince into far closer neighbourhood than was consistent with the security and independence of France. The children, however, were as yet in their infancy, and the indifference of Maximilian delayed during four years the execution of the treaty. In the mean time, Louis was entreated at a great Assembly of Notables, held in 1506, to marry the Princess Claude to Francis of Angoulême, the heir-presumptive to the throne; and this more politic suggestion was adopted, though the marriage was not actually solemnized till eight years afterwards, owing to the youth of the parties.

Since the conquest of the Milanese, Genoa, which had never ceased to consider herself a republic, though the dignity of supreme magistrate had been conferred first on Sforza, and afterwards on Louis XII., as duke of Milan, had learned by experience that her foreign master was incapable of comprehending her laws and her liberty. All the stipulations she had made respecting the conservation of her internal freedom, her govern-

ment, and independence, were successively violated by the French, in league with Genoese nobles who betrayed their country. The patience of the people was exhausted; in February, 1507, they rose up, drove out the French, proclaimed the republic, and named a new doge; but time failed them to provide for their defence. Louis arrived before Genoa with a powerful army, and the newly raised militia, unable to withstand veteran troops, were defeated. The French king entered the city on the 29th of April, and immediately sent the doge and the greater number of the patriotic citizens, who had signalized themselves in the cause of their country, to the scaffold.

Various circumstances had retarded the execution of the treaty secretly concluded at Blois, and if either gratitude or good policy had been allowed to influence the mind of Louis, those articles of it which related to the spoliation of Venice would never have been executed at all. Venice had special claims to his gratitude. It had stood firmly by him in his Italian war, and when Maximilian had endeavoured to attack him in the Milanese in the beginning of 1508, the Venetians had refused him a passage through their territories, and sustained three months' hostilities in consequence. Yet in the December of that same year, the king and the emperor renewed their former engagements by the League of Cambray, and agreed to divide between them all the Venetian territory on the mainland; to abandon to Spain the fortresses of the republic in Apulia, and to the Pope, Julius II., the towns possessed by Venice in the Romagna.

France was the first to declare war, January, 1509. In the spring of the year Louis himself invaded the Venetian states, and declaring his purpose of spreading terror wherever his standards were seen, committed horrible cruelties; quiet citizens and defeated garrisons being confounded together in deliberate, promiscuous slaughter. Outrages like these helped to reverse the policy of the Pope. Having obtained the cities in the

Romagna, and seen the Venetians sufficiently humbled, he was reconciled to them; and his next thought was how to drive the barbarous invaders of the republic out of her territory. With Venice, the Spaniards, and the Swiss, he formed a confederacy, called the *Holy League*, which had for its object the expulsion of foreigners from Italian soil. Louis, in order to oppose another ecclesiastical authority to that of the Pope, even ventured, in concert with Maximilian, to convoke an œcumenical council at Pisa, and a few cardinals, who had separated themselves from the Pope, met there, and pronounced that the authority of the Holy See was in a state of suspension. Changing the place of meeting to Lyons, the king of France persisted in this schismatical proceeding for two years. But Julius convoked a council of eighty-three bishops from all parts of Christendom, who acknowledged his authority as Head of the Church. The war was, however, to be carried on by other means than these. During three years, the armies of Louis contended with those of Venice, of Spain, and of the Pope. Gaston de Foix, the wonderful general of twenty-two, who was esteemed one of the greatest captains that Europe had produced, commanded them, and Bayard fought in their ranks. After several successes, defaced, however, by excessive cruelty, Gaston fought his last battle, near Ravenna, on Easter Sunday, 1512. It was the most murderous that Italy had yet seen; nearly 20,000 dead covered the field. The formidable Spanish infantry, though defeated, was slowly retreating without permitting itself to be broken in any degree; Gaston, furious at its escaping him, made one last effort against it, and was killed. His death was the signal for the final defeat of the French in Italy.

Ferdinand of Aragon and Henry VIII. of England attacked Louis almost at the same time. The Swiss retook the Milanese for the son of Ludovico Sforza; and the Genoese citizens rose up again and expelled the French. Maximilian now joined Spain and England

against France. The English defeated the French at Guinegate, in Artois (in the action called *The Battle of the Spurs*), in 1513, taking several illustrious captains, Bayard among them, prisoners. The Swiss entirely defeated another French army at Novara, in Lombardy, and another Swiss force laid siege to Dijon; while the only ally who remained to Louis, James IV. of Scotland, was killed at the battle of Flodden Field.

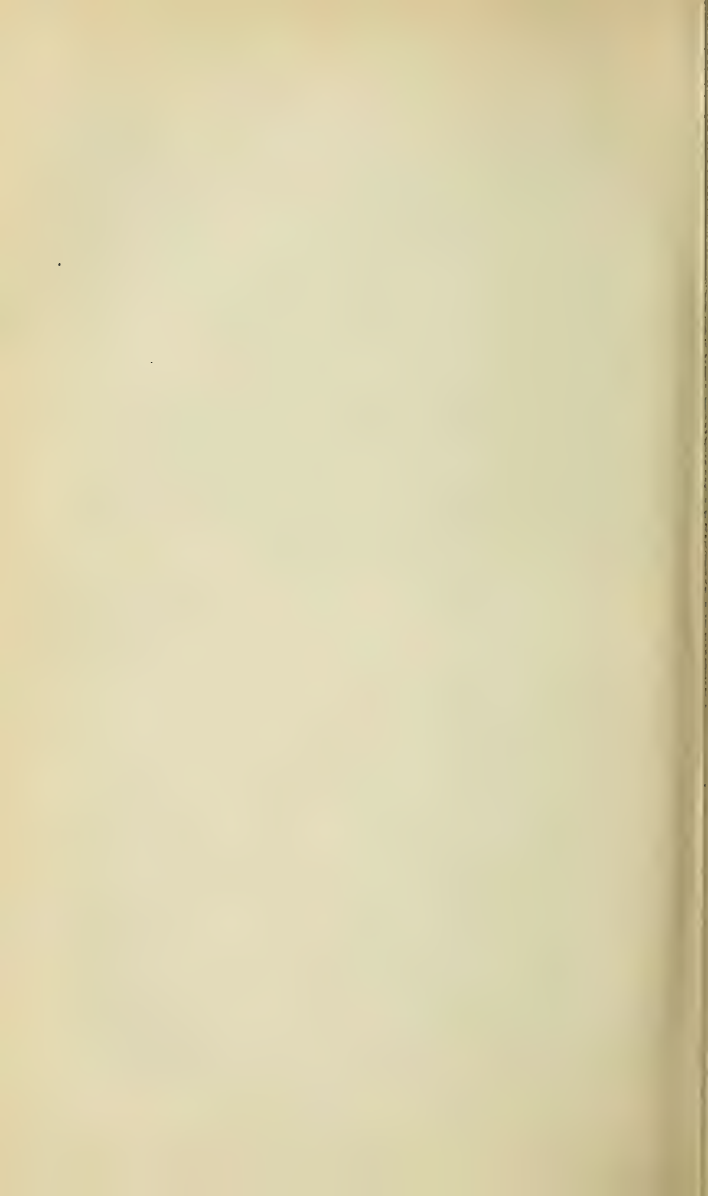
Pressed on all sides, and troubled in conscience also by the schismatical assembly he was promoting, the king put an end to the Council of Lyons, and concluded a truce with all his antagonists. With England he made a more solid peace; and his wife, Anne of Brittany, having died some time before, the agreement between the two nations was cemented by a marriage with the Princess Mary, youngest sister of Henry VIII. Mary was but sixteen, Louis fifty-three, and aged by sickness more than by years. He welcomed his young queen by actively participating in all the feasts and rejoicings which celebrated her arrival at the French court; but the effort was too much for him, and he died in less than three months after the wedding; January 1st, 1515.

His death caused universal lamentation in France, for the kindness and consideration he had exhibited for his own people were in the strongest contrast with the cruelties which had disgraced his Italian wars. He was frugal but not mean; maintaining due magnificence in his court, yet careful not to burden his subjects by useless extravagance. His courtiers murmured and jested about what they called his *miserly* habits; Louis heard it, and said, "I had much rather let my courtiers laugh at my avarice, than make my subjects weep by my prodigality." But his expensive and unjust wars undid much of the good effected by his economy at home; and towards the end of his reign, he was forced to augment the taxes, and to procure money also by parting with a portion of the royal domains. He had recourse likewise to the injurious expedient of selling places under the govern-

ment ; but he did not, like some other French kings, dispose of the office of judge in this manner.

The king's favourite minister, George d'Amboise, who died in 1510, was also much beloved by the people ; but he, too, like his master, had no conscience in respect of foreign nations. His fatal advice helped to allure Louis to those aggressions on Italy in which he displayed equal violence and perfidy, buying, betraying, and sacrificing the populations of cities and states, without scruple, in order to aggrandize himself.

The close of the reign of Louis XII. marks the end of the feudal period of the monarchy, which had lasted 528 years, from the accession of Hugh Capet in 987. We now enter on the period of absolute monarchy, which extends from the accession of Francis I. to that convocation of the States-general by Louis XVI. in 1789, which ushered in the great French Revolution.





PART THIRD.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS I. TO THE  
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

1515-1789.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

Character of Francis I.—Louisa of Savoy: her fatal influence on the morals of the Nation.—Invasion of Italy, 1515.—Concordat with Leo X., 1516: Resistance of the Parliament of Paris: Subjugation of the Parliament by Francis.—Rivalry of Francis and Charles V.: Loss of the Milanese.—Revolt of the Constable de Bourbon: Death of Bayard, 1524.—Battle of Pavia, 1525: Francis a prisoner to Charles V.: Treaty of Madrid, 1526.—Bad Faith of Francis.—Renewal of War in Italy: Sack of Rome.—“*The Ladies’ Peace*,” 1529.

FROM 1515 A.D. TO 1529.

FRANCIS I. was twenty years of age when he succeeded to the throne; he was cousin-german to Louis XII., descended, like him, from the brother of Charles VI. Deprived of his father at an early age, he had fallen entirely under the guidance and influence of his mother, Louisa of Savoy, a woman of loose morals, violent temper, and grasping ambition, whose unrestrained indulgence had fostered in him a desire for absolute power.

The romances of chivalry had been his only study, and like Charles VIII. he aspired to follow in the steps of Roland and his paladins. But with these romantic notions he mingled an overweening idea of his kingly prerogative, and could not conceive that either parliaments, nobles, states-general, or any person or law whatsoever, could possess any right to limit his authority.

Intent, however, on amusement and military adventure, he suffered the government to fall into the hands of his mother, who with the Chancellor Duprat, a man of venal corrupt spirit, long ruled the state as they pleased, in the name of the king.

It was even of worse consequence that the king’s

mother ruled the court also. Claude of Brittany, his wife, was still but a child in years, and when she grew to maturity, ever preserved the retiring, obedient character of her girlhood. Louisa of Savoy therefore reigned supreme, and "turned the court into a nursery of vice ; filling the palace with her minions, and leading the way in that corruption of morals which became a plague-spot in the social life of France during several succeeding reigns. The decay of feudal privileges, in lessening the importance and independence of the nobility, had led men to regard the throne more than ever as the fountain of honour. Men of high birth left their castles and domains to cluster round the sovereign, and frittered away life and fortune in the pursuit of royal favours. Under these circumstances, the gay, handsome young king, devoted to pleasure, affable to all comers, at once caught and spread the general infection, till the homely virtues of prudence and chastity became a theme for ridicule with wits and courtiers."

From the time of his accession, Francis looked to Italy as the field on which he was to signalize himself. In the summer of 1515, he mustered a powerful army, and avoiding the usual passes, which were guarded by Swiss troops, he crossed the mountains by a new route, and descended in the middle of August on the plains of Lombardy. Maximilian Sforza, the son of Ludovico, reigned at Milan. The first exploit of the French was to surprise and capture his general, Colonna, which was a heavy blow and discouragement to the Milanese ; but the Swiss, Sforza's allies, hastened from their mountains to the number of 20,000, and in spite of all attempts of their commanders to restrain them, rushed impetuously to attack the invaders at Marignano. "Deep ditches lined with soldiers bordered the causeway by which they advanced ; the Swiss captains wished by some manœuvre to get clear of them, or make the enemy change his position ; but their men, despising all the arts of war, expected to command success by mere intrepidity and bodily strength.

They marched to the battery in full front, they repulsed the attack of the knights with their halberds, and threw themselves with fury into the ditches which barred their advance. Some rushed on to the very mouths of the cannon which guarded the king, and there fell. Night closed on the combatants, and the two armies, mingled together, fought on for four hours longer by moonlight. Complete darkness at length forced them to rest on their arms. But the king's trumpet continually sounded to indicate the bivouac where he was to be found, while the two famous horns of Uri and Unterwalden called the Swiss together.

"The battle was renewed at daybreak, with the same unrelenting obstinacy ; but the French had taken advantage of the night to fortify their position. One of their chief commanders, who had been present at eighteen pitched battles, declared that every other seemed to him mere child's play in comparison with this 'battle of giants : ' 20,000 dead, of whom two-thirds were Swiss, already covered the ground. When the Swiss despaired of victory, they retreated slowly, but menacing and terrible. The French did not dare to pursue them."

This famous battle was fought on the 13th and 14th of September, 1515. The next day Francis desired that Bayard, who had distinguished himself above all others by his feats of valour on that bloody field, would confer on him the order of knighthood. The victory of Marignano gave the French possession of the whole duchy of Milan. To secure his conquest more firmly, Francis sought an alliance with the Swiss ; and a treaty, called *the Perpetual Peace*, to which both nations held fast for centuries, was the result. To France, in her numerous wars with other European states, this alliance proved of very great service, enabling her to recruit her armies with the admirable Swiss infantry.

Pope Leo X. also made alliance with Francis, and induced him to sign a celebrated concordat (1516), by which the liberties of the Gallican Church were thought

to be sacrificed. It rendered void the chief articles of the Pragmatic Sanction, which had continued in force, notwithstanding the decree by which Louis XI. repealed that ordinance. It acknowledged the authority of the Pope to be superior to that of general councils: it restored to the Pope the *Annates* (or first year's revenue of every benefice which fell vacant): it took from the chapters of churches and monasteries the right of electing their bishops and abbots, and gave the nomination to the king. Before the concordat could be binding on all parties, it was necessary that it should be accepted by the fifth Lateran Council then sitting at Rome, and registered by the Parliament of Paris. The Council accepted it at once; the Parliament, upheld by the University of Paris, resisted the king's order, appealing to the decrees of the council which Charles VII. had convoked at Bourges in 1438. Greatly offended, Francis insisted on implicit obedience; the Parliament sent a deputation of its magistrates to remonstrate respectfully; the king became furious, and threatened to throw them all into an underground dungeon; and the Parliament, not daring to persist, obeyed. The following year they were required to sanction a law imposing most barbarous punishments for offences against the laws of the chase. "Obey," said the chancellor Duprat, "or the king will look upon you as rebels, and will chastise you as severely as if you were the most insignificant of his subjects." And the assembled magistrates obeyed. From that day no one dared to open his lips against any measure of the king, and Francis boasted that he had made the Crown really independent.

The year after the accession of Francis, Ferdinand of Spain had died, leaving the inheritance of Castile and Aragon to his grandson Charles, a youth of sixteen, who had already become master of the Netherlands by the death of his father, the Archduke Philip the Fair. Philip's father, Maximilian, survived Ferdinand three years; at his death, Charles inherited the possessions of the house of Austria, and became a candidate for the



vacant empire, to which Francis also aspired. Francis lavished gold on the electors ; but Germany, threatened with invasion by the Turks, needed an emperor whose hereditary states might interpose a barrier between the empire and the Mussulman barbarians ; and the Austrian dominions of Charles, joined to his power and manifold resources as the sovereign of so many countries, determined the election in his favour (1519). The preference given to a rival under twenty, whose genius lay hidden, as yet, beneath a plain and ungraceful exterior, wounded Francis to the quick. "We shall be friends," he had written to Charles when the result was made known, "notwithstanding ; the loser must not hate the winner." But these were words of course ; for Francis had hoped to play the part of Charlemagne, and Charles on his side aspired to universal empire ; and for the next twenty years Europe was disturbed by their rivalries. The only other power of consequence in Europe was England, now ruled by Henry VIII., whose alliance was so sedulously courted both by the emperor and the king of France, that he was led to believe himself the arbiter of the continent.

The same year, 1520, which witnessed the splendid coronation of Charles at Cologne, witnessed also the famous meeting of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, between Francis and Henry ; where the two kings amused themselves for several weeks with jousts and festivities, and exchanged vows of eternal friendship. But immediately before Henry's embarkation for this brilliant meeting, Charles, on his way from Spain to Germany, had paid him a visit at Dover ; and by promising his favourite minister, Cardinal Wolsey, that he would use all endeavours to advance him to the Papacy when a vacancy occurred, had entirely won the support of that ambitious statesman. Wolsey, who ruled his master for his own purposes, soon drew him aside from the French alliance to side with the emperor.

Open war broke out between the rival monarchs in

1521. The kingdom of Navarre, which belonged to the house of Albret, had been invaded some years before by Ferdinand of Aragon, who stripped it of all the territory lying south of the Pyrenees. Francis now took opportunity of an insurrection, which had broken out in Spain, to re-conquer Spanish Navarre for his ally, John d'Albret. But venturing farther into the country, the French troops were defeated, and Navarre recovered by Charles. Hostilities broke out also on the Flemish frontiers; but the chief seat of the war was Italy. The insolence and exactions of the French had rendered their name odious in the Milanese. The people resolved to expel them, and put themselves under Francis Sforza, brother to the late duke. The pope, Leo X., had abandoned his alliance with France; he hired Swiss, and formed an army to assist in the expulsion of the French troops, who were defeated, and lost almost all their possessions in Lombardy. The king raised another army for the support of his general, Lautrec, but 400,000 crowns, destined by Francis for the payment of the troops, had been embezzled, unknown to him, by his mother; and Lautrec, embarrassed by the discontent of the soldiers, was first defeated, and then abandoned, by the remains of his force. The Milanese was once more lost to France; Cremona being the only place which remained to Francis.

His treasury was empty. The taxes were raised, but still more money was wanted. At the fatal suggestion of Duprat, the number of the magistrates was doubled, and their office put up to sale; and in spite of repeated remonstrances, in several succeeding reigns, by various bodies in the State, this miserable expedient of selling the judge's office continued to be practised until the overthrow of the monarchy. But even so, the public revenue gained little or nothing, while it was plundered to provide for the extravagance of Louisa of Savoy. The violent and grasping disposition of this princess had made many enemies, and the court was divided into two parties; one ruled by herself, Chancellor Duprat, and the Admiral

Bonnivet, both of whom were high in the king's favour; the other directed by the duchess of Chateaubriand, the king's mistress, with her brother, Lautrec, and the Constable de Bourbon. Bourbon was the wealthiest and most powerful lord in the kingdom. Louisa of Savoy proposed to him that he should marry her. He rejected the offer indignantly, and in terms which the vindictive princess swore should cost him dear. She caused him to be most unjustly sued at law. The Parliament could not pronounce against him, and dared not decide in his favour; and the king, incited by his mother, most iniquitously seized and annexed to the crown all the immense possessions of the constable; the Bourbonnais, Dauphiné, Auvergne, and several other important fiefs. Bourbon, enraged at this injustice, turned traitor, and entered into treaty with Henry VIII. and the emperor, for the dismemberment of the kingdom. Provence was to be his share; Languedoc, Burgundy, Champagne, and Picardy were assigned to Charles; Normandy and the other rich provinces, long possessed by England, were to be regained by her.

The plot was discovered by Francis before it was ripe for execution. Bourbon, forced to fly, took refuge in Germany, but soon re-appeared at the head of the imperial army. Bonnivet, whom the king had sent to re-conquer the Milanese, encountered Bourbon in battle, at the Sesia (1524), and was defeated. Bayard was mortally wounded in this action. He bade his men prop him up against a tree with his face toward the enemy, and leave him there to die. Bourbon, hearing of his wound, hastened to him and expressed great sorrow and pity. "I need no pity," said Bayard, "it is you who are to be pitied for fighting against your king and country." So died the most beloved and the most famous of all the French knights whose names history has preserved. The imperialists now invaded Provence. Many towns submitted; Marseilles, defended by a brave body of Florentine patriots, who had fled from their country, sustained a

siege, and the enemy, informed that Francis was approaching, retreated.

The king entered Italy, and every town opened its gates to him, until he reached Pavia, which was well garrisoned by a Spanish force. He laid siege to it, and had been encamped before the city several weeks, when a large army under Bourbon and the Spanish generals approached to give him battle. The French were completely routed, and Francis, after seeing his best captains and the flower of his nobility perish by his side, was forced to surrender himself a prisoner (February 25th, 1525). In a few weeks, not a Frenchman was to be seen in Italy.

After a short confinement in the citadel of Pizzighettone, the king was transferred to Madrid. Neither the captivity of King John, nor the insanity of Charles VI., had taught France that a kingdom ought not to be left exposed to the consequences of every calamity which might fall upon the sovereign for the time being. Francis had committed the regency to his mother when he departed for Italy, so that the authority of the throne was not left unrepresented in his absence ; but he alone had the power to come to any terms with his captor, and to reject or accept the conditions on which Charles might propose to restore him to liberty. They were hard enough ; the surrender of the duchy of Burgundy (which the emperor claimed as having been wrongfully detained from his grandmother, the daughter of Charles the Rash, by Louis XI.) ; the surrender of his right of suzerain over the earldoms of Flanders and Artois ; the abandonment of all claims to Naples and the Milanese ; full pardon of the Constable Bourbon, and restitution of all his domains ; marriage with Charles's sister, the queen dowager of Portugal (for Queen Claude was dead) ; and finally, a league offensive and defensive with the emperor, whom Francis was to accompany in person when he went forth to war either against Turks or heretics. Charles, on his side, engaged to desist from all claims on the towns of the

Somme which had belonged to Charles the Rash. Francis long hesitated, for the cession of Burgundy in particular (though it was true that Louis XI. had seized it dishonestly), was calculated to prove very dangerous to France. He fell ill at last; and the emperor, who till then had refused to see him, and now feared he should lose his prisoner, and all the advantages he had hoped for by the capture, came to visit him with words of friendship and sympathy. But Francis on his recovery could obtain no easier terms. He promised therefore to observe these; gave his two sons as hostages for the faithful performance of his promise, and having embraced the youths in a bark on the Bidassoa, the boundary river between France and Spain, he threw himself on his horse, exclaiming joyfully, "Now I am again a king!" and galloped almost without stopping to Bayonne, where he found his mother and a brilliant court assembled to welcome him.

In escaping from his captivity, which had lasted more than a year, he conceived that he had equally escaped from all obligation to perform the conditions on which his liberty had been restored to him. When the envoys of the emperor pressed him to satisfy the treaty of Madrid, and give up Burgundy to their master, he replied that "he had no right to dismember the kingdom which at his coronation he had sworn to preserve entire; that the states of Burgundy refused to concur in the cession, that the parliament of Paris had pronounced the stipulation to be void;" together with other excuses which were transparent evasions. Charles had but one reply for them all: "Let not the king of France charge his breach of faith upon his subjects; if he desires to keep his promise, he has but to return to Spain, and remain there while he lives. Let him do so." But to return to Spain was the very last thing to which Francis would have consented.

Henry VIII. beginning to dread the too great aggrandizement of the emperor, had already entered into a treaty of peace and alliance with France; in which those states of Italy which still preserved any political existence, con-



cured, and Pope Clement VII. became a party to the league, and absolved Francis from the oath he had taken to observe the treaty of Madrid.

The confederates took the field in Italy, but before the French troops had crossed the Alps, 15,000 Germans, under command of Bourbon, swept over Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Romagna, and on the 6th May, 1527, marched to the sack of the city of Rome. Bourbon was at the head of the assailants, with a ladder in his hand; but at the moment when he was about to scale the wall, he was shot dead. "More exasperated than dispirited by the fall of their leader, the soldiers entered the city with cries of revenge; and though the taking a great city is almost always one of the most horrible scenes of human guilt and misery, all writers assure us that the storming of Rome surpassed every other in horror." Eight thousand men, women, and children were butchered the first day; but war in most of its terrible calamities raged in the city for several months, during the siege of the castle of St. Angelo, in which the pope and several cardinals had taken refuge. Such was the hypocrisy of Charles, that on learning the misfortunes of Clement, he put his court into mourning, suspended the public rejoicings for the birth of his son, and commanded prayers to be offered throughout Spain for the deliverance of the pontiff, whom the emperor himself had commanded his generals to imprison.

Henry and Francis were preparing to invade the Netherlands. On hearing of the pope's captivity, they changed the scene of war to Italy; Henry undertook to supply money, and Francis to levy soldiers. A fine army was sent accordingly under Lautrec. The pope was set at liberty; but Lautrec advancing towards Naples, led his troops to destruction. He sat down before the city to blockade it from May till August; and there, under a burning sun, without sufficiency of food or water, almost the whole of the army perished by pestilential fevers; Lautrec himself being among the victims. The following year, 1529



another French army, under the Count de St. Pol, was defeated and dispersed in the Milanese. And to complete the sum of misfortune, the great Genoese admiral, Andrea Doria, offended at the disregard of the French for the rights of his fellow-citizens, abandoned the service of Francis, and passed over to that of the emperor.

The misery of Italy was excessive ; but France also, and the dominions of the emperor, were suffering grievously from the distresses entailed by prolonged war. Peace seemed the more necessary to Charles, in that the Turks, under their great sultan Suleiman, had overrun Hungary, and were threatening Austria ; while the Reformation was making so great progress in Germany, that the emperor began to apprehend resistance to his authority on the part of the Protestant princes. Under these circumstances, Louisa of Savoy and the emperor’s aunt, Margaret of Austria, met at Cambray (August, 1529), and negotiated a treaty known as “*the Ladies’ Peace.*” Francis agreed to pay 2,000,000 crowns, as a ransom for his sons ; to give up all claims on Italy, and to resign the sovereignty of Flanders and Artois ; Charles abandoned all claims to Burgundy.

As for his Italian allies, Francis abandoned them without scruple to the emperor ; falsifying every promise by which he had induced them to engage in the war.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Commencement of the Reformation.—Abuses prevalent in the Gallican Church.—Martyrdom of Berquin.—Calvin.—Alliance of Francis I. with the Pope.—The Procession of the Fête de Paris: Cruel Executions of the day, and their Effects.—Francis allies himself with the Turks.—War with the Emperor, and with England.—Visit of Charles V.—Treaties of Crespy (1544), and of Guisnes (1546).—Massacre of Merindol.—Death of Francis I.—His Encouragement of Learning.—Incorporation of Brittany.

FROM 1529 A.D. TO 1547.

THE reign of Francis I. covers an important period in the history of the Church. When it began, Luther was quietly lecturing on theology at Wittenberg, without any anticipation of ever finding himself involved in controversy with the pope. When it ended, the great Reformer had run his course; a large portion of Europe had already shaken off the yoke of Rome, and the movement was still spreading and deepening, detaching nations and kingdoms from their allegiance to the Papacy, and diffusing the spirit of religious inquiry and reform, even in countries where the great majority of the population clung fast to the traditions of their forefathers.

In France,\* the Reformation, or, as it was called there, "the New Learning," made many proselytes; not so much amongst the poor or the unlettered classes, as amongst men of education. Nor were the Reformers without favourers and protectors even in the court itself. The king's sister, Margaret, queen of Navarre, was a warm friend to them, and under her influence Francis

\* For all that relates to the History of the French Reformers, the writer is especially indebted to Smedley's "History of the Reformation in France."

was induced, for a time, to leave them unmolested, and even occasionally to interfere in their behalf. But the magistrates generally, and the majority of those who sat in the parliament of Paris especially, pursued them with extreme severity.

The abuses which were rife in the Gallican Church at this time eminently assisted the progress of the Reformation in France. The Crown had by degrees assumed to itself the patronage of almost all the great ecclesiastical preferments, and had rendered bishoprics and abbeyes prizes of court favouritism, instead of rewards of piety and learning. The men who were so promoted, deeply injured the credit of the Church by total ignorance or neglect of its duties; even if they did not give occasion for scandal by open licentiousness. The privilege of *commendam* was a fruitful source of disorder. In the earlier Christian Church, whenever a hostile irruption, a famine, or any other public calamity had so far diminished the revenues of an episcopal see, or a religious house, as to render them insufficient for the support of its ordinary head, the metropolitan *recommended* the pastoral charge to some neighbouring ecclesiastic, who accepted this addition to his duties gratuitously, till a more favourable opportunity permitted a re-establishment of the suspended dignity. This custom, at first charitable and praiseworthy, had degenerated in more corrupt times into a grievous abuse. Ambition and avarice fostering the desire of exalted station and overflowing coffers, *commendams* were perverted to accumulate the richest sees in plurality upon ecclesiastics by whom they never could be visited. In France, the wealthiest benefices were abundantly showered down upon those whose connection with the blood royal or whose cabinet duties as ministers of state attached them to the court; even women were admitted as *Lay Bishops*, and either sold their bishoprics, or provided substitutes (or *Custodines*, as they were termed), to perform the sacred offices for the least possible stipend. Similar abuses prevailed among the in-

ferior clergy ; and dispensations were so readily granted, that in a vast number of instances, the people lived either without any pastors at all, or with curates unworthy of the name.

A reform of these grievous temporal abuses, preached boldly by men who announced also a more enlightened spiritual doctrine, which they asserted in despite of bonds, persecution, and death, and who maintained their purity of teaching by a correspondent purity of life, was certain to obtain zealous partisans ; especially when it was opposed not by argument, but by arms ; combated only by the sword of the law and the terrors of the stake.

Brignonnet, bishop of Meaux, was among the few exemplary prelates of his day. He not only personally laboured without ceasing among his flock, but invited also, as public teachers, many of the most devout and learned graduates of the university of Paris. Several of these were deeply imbued with the "New Learning," and their preaching widely diffused the seeds of it. In 1522 Lefèvre conferred on his countrymen the invaluable boon of the New Testament in their own language. But the monks of Meaux, finding their profits and their congregations sensibly diminished since the bishop had invited the preachers into his diocese, denounced them to the Parliament of Paris as heretics ; and the Parliament, taking serious cognizance of the charge, at once arrested all who had not sought safety in flight. Brignonnet himself was cited to appear before the tribunal, and persuaded or intimidated into a withdrawal of his countenance from the innovators ; most of whom were banished the kingdom, after having been scourged through the streets of Paris, and branded with a hot iron at Meaux.

Amongst the gentry of France, Louis Berquin, employed in the honourable office of King's Advocate, led the way to martyrdom. Berquin, who was a friend of Erasmus, had maintained through life a singularly blameless character ; he was remarkable, both for his strict observance of the rites and ordinances of the

Church, and for his unbounded charity to the needy, insomuch that his enemies could find no other offence to lay to his charge than that he had translated into French some writings of Luther, in which, amongst other heterodox matter, were found a declaration that the Scriptures ought to be read to the people at large in the vernacular tongue; a remonstrance against the invocation of the Virgin Mary, often substituted in sermons in lieu of that of the Holy Ghost; a denial that she was the fountain of all grace, and a wish that certain expressions in the Vesper service, which, contrary to the unvarying tenor of Scripture, designated her as "our life and hope," should be restricted to the Son, to whom they properly appertained.

As Berquin declined to retract his adherence to these doctrines, he would at once have been led to the stake, but for the intervention of powerful friends, who twice rescued him out of the hands of the Parliament; the king himself, interfering on the second occasion to command his release from prison. But a few years later, when Francis was closely occupied with his schemes of foreign conquest, he forgot or abandoned his former client, and the long protracted and persevering enmity of the Parliament was then fully gratified. Six hundred armed men surrounded the Place de Grève on the day of Berquin's execution, instructed to drown his last speech if he should attempt to deliver one; and accordingly the few words he attempted to utter to the people were rendered inaudible by the shouts of the soldiers. But he went to the stake as tranquilly, says Erasmus, as if he had been "meditating in his library upon his studies, or in the church upon his God;" and "if he died with a sound conscience, as I verily hope he did die, tell me whose death could be happier?"

Cardinal du Bellay, who was for some years archbishop of Paris, was even an admirer and correspondent of Melancthon, though he ventured not openly to show indulgence to the adherents of the New Learning. But as years advanced, the followers of Luther almost dis-

appeared in France under the superior influence of a native Reformer. John Calvin was born at Noyon, in Picardy, in 1509; and being destined by his father for the priesthood, was presented, at the early age of twelve years, to a benefice in the gift of the bishop. Subsequently, by his father's desire, he applied himself to the study of civil law; and while engaged in this pursuit at the schools of Orleans and Bourges, laid the foundation of his acquaintance with the original languages of Holy Scripture, under a learned German Reformer, who was befriended by the queen of Navarre. Removing afterwards to Paris, where his learning and devotion to theological study began to attract attention, Calvin made the acquaintance of a number of religious persons, who were accustomed to meet together in private, to worship God in their own language; and became confirmed in his resolution to devote himself to the service of religion, but not in the Church of Rome. Accused soon afterwards of Lutheranism, he was obliged to fly from Paris, and take refuge at Angoulême, where the protection of Margaret of Navarre shielded him from arrest. Here he composed his most famous work, the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," which was originally published in 1536, to vindicate the faith and character of his reforming brethren from the aspersions cast upon them by their enemies; and which he prefaced with a fearless and eloquent remonstrance to Francis I., whose hands were at that time reeking with the blood of martyrs to Protestantism. In the same year, he was invited to settle at Geneva; and in 1541 was finally established there, with power to mould and build up the Church, according to that form of doctrine, and that ecclesiastical polity and discipline, which had commended itself to his own mind. The situation of Geneva, as a free and independent city on the confines of France, afforded many facilities for aiding the work of the Reformers in that country, and might well awaken in Calvin's bosom the hope that he was set apart as the chosen apostle of his native land. If such



was his anticipation, it was in a great degree realized ; for his Confession of Faith became the standard of doctrine, and his scheme of polity and worship the received authority and model of every reformed congregation within the limits of France.

The toleration which Francis had afforded to his Protestant subjects, imperfect and uncertain as it had been at best, was not of long continuance. When the Protestant princes of Germany formed the confederacy for mutual defence, called the League of Smalcalde, they invited the king of France to join them ; and Francis, desirous above all things to find the means of weakening and discomfiting his rival, the emperor, endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with them for that purpose. But he was too thoroughly a despot at heart to endure long that his own people should exercise the right of private judgment. And being intent, as ever, upon the conquest of Italy, he thought it necessary to cultivate the good-will of the pope. To this end he caused his second son, Henry, to marry the pope's niece, Catherine de Medicis, and although the lady's uncle (Clement VII.) died too soon for Francis to reap the advantage he had expected from this union, he cemented his alliance with Rome by a cruel persecution of his heretic subjects.

The misconduct of a few heated spirits (if indeed the whole matter were not a device of their enemies to throw discredit upon the cause of the Reformers) furnished a plausible pretext for the infliction of punishment on their brethren. On the same night, violent, coarsely-worded placards reflecting on the doctrine of the Mass were affixed in the streets of Paris and other large towns, and on the gates of the palace of Blois, where the court was then residing. It was not known by whose hands this offensive folly had been perpetrated ; but the ministers of the king persuaded him that it betokened a dangerous seditious combination which must be repressed with the utmost rigour. Numerous arrests were accordingly made of persons charged with heresy ; and a rumour was spread

abroad in the capital, that these unhappy men had plotted to surprise the Catholic population during mass, and to put men, women, and children, indiscriminately to the sword. Absurd as this tale was, it was readily credited by the populace, and inflamed their desire to see the extremest severity employed against the supposed criminals.

As for the king, he resolved to give a striking proof of his attachment to the true faith ; and convince his own subjects and his Italian allies, but above all, the pope, of his rooted abhorrence of heresy. In the depth of a severe winter (January, 1535) he hastened to Paris, and there arranged an expiatory procession ; in which himself, his queen, the princes of the blood, the peers of France, the great officers of the crown, and the ambassadors from foreign courts, personally assisted. An image of St. Geneviève, the patroness of the city, never exhibited except in seasons of heaviest public calamity, was committed to the guardianship of the town butchers, who, from time immemorial, had claimed the privilege of that sacred custody. Three days' fasting and prayer prepared them for the charge, and when they appeared abroad their path was cleared with difficulty from the eager throng who pressed upon their steps, for happy was he among the spectators who could touch the propitious idol with the tip of his finger, or even with his cap or his handkerchief. Next came the precious relics of the *Sainte Chapelle*, and of all the parish churches of the city, carried by bearers who walked with naked feet and with no other covering than a shirt. The archbishop of Paris followed with the consecrated host, the canopy over which was held by the king's sons. Next appeared the king himself, carrying a torch in his hand, and supported by the cardinals of Bourbon and Lorraine, to whom he delivered the torch at every halt of the procession, while he clasped his hands, knelt humbly upon the ground, and implored the mercy of Heaven upon his people.

Accompanied by all manner of music, military and

ecclesiastical, the procession slowly made its way through the whole extent of the city. The king and court afterwards dined with the archbishop, and at the conclusion of the banquet, Francis addressed the assembly in a speech descriptive of the anguish he experienced at the outrage offered to the august mysteries of the faith "by perverse men, unworthy of the name of men;" and urged them to denounce without pity all whom they knew to be heretics. Kindling with his own eloquence, and the excitement of his audience, who responded to his words with groans and lamentations, he exclaimed, "Before God, if my right arm were gangrened, I would cheerfully cut it off and cast it from me! And if my own sons were seduced by these detestable novelties, I would be the first to furnish proofs of their guilt."

On the moment a proclamation was drawn up and issued, commanding all French subjects, on pain of being dealt with as accomplices, to lay informations against every heretic whom they could discover, his harbourers and concealers. The fourth part of the property of any of these criminals was promised as a reward to the informer who should bring them to justice; and as the press had been the great engine of recent offence, its operations for the present were declared to be entirely suspended. Nor was this tyrannical edict considered sufficient; the ceremonies of the day were to be concluded with a spectacle of unparalleled horror.

As evening approached, the king, attended by his brilliant suite, proceeded in succession to six different places of execution, at each of which an equal number of heretics were tarrying his arrival in all the bitterness of preparation for an agonizing death. As if the ordinary terrors of the stake were inadequate for the punishment now required, these victims, bound to the extremity of long poles, were alternately lowered to, and withdrawn from the blazing piles, till the ropes, by which they were fastened, caught fire, snapped asunder, and plunged their already half-burnt limbs into the devouring flame. The

hideous spectacle which Francis thus caused to be exhibited, gave the people of Paris a taste for blood which, during four successive reigns, scarcely ever ceased to offer new victims to Moloch, until their fanaticism, maddened by indulgence into the last degree of ferocity, glutted itself in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, thirty-seven years afterwards.

Francis might be unconscious that his cruelty was a moral crime, but he was soon made to feel that he had committed a political blunder; for the princes of the League of Smalcalde, astonished and indignant, that while courting alliance with Protestants abroad, he should pursue them to the death at home, received his further advances but coldly, and refused to entertain his proposals for united hostilities against the emperor.

Repulsed by the Protestants, the king of France allied himself with the Turks. Two brothers, named Barberossa, in the service of the sultan, kept Europe in fear by their piracies; covered the Mediterranean with their ships, and pillaging the coasts of Spain, France, and Italy, yearly carried off a multitude of Christian men into slavery. While Charles V. was sending a fleet to attack them, capturing Tunis, and delivering 20,000 Christian captives, the *most Christian* king of France was encouraging Barberossa to make a descent on Naples, and in concert with a French land force to assail Savoy, whose duke was a brother-in-law and ally to the emperor. The horror inspired by the ravages of the Turkish admiral, who in one year made ten thousand slaves on the Italian coasts, was shared by his ally, the king, and the name of Francis I. became a reproach in Italy and Germany. Fresh invasions by the emperor, sometimes in alliance with Henry VIII., who attacked Picardy while Charles advanced into Champagne, followed, while Francis made reprisals in the Netherlands.

At an earlier period of the war, while Francis, still intent upon the acquisition of the Milanese, was over-running Piedmont to the frontiers of Lombardy, the

imperial forces were invading Provence, which was turned into a desert by the French armies themselves, in order to arrest the advance of the foe ; the vines rooted up, the harvests burned, the wells destroyed, the towns, even the capital, Aix, sacked and abandoned.

In the midst of these hostilities, however, a truce was negotiated by the mediation of the pope, Paul III., who longed to unite the two monarchs, that they might proceed together in the extermination of the Reformers. And Charles, desirous to pass through France, as the quickest way of reaching Ghent from Spain, where he at that time was, took advantage of the chivalrous sentiments on which Francis piqued himself, to request a safe-conduct for the journey. It was granted, on condition that he would give Milan to the king's younger son, which being promised, Francis received him with the most profuse magnificence. Nevertheless, in the midst of fêtes and banquets, the emperor was made to feel that he trod on dangerous ground, by many little incidents ; and a numerous party in the court, with the ruling favourite, the duchess d'Etampes, at their head, were for violating the safe-conduct at all hazards. "Sire," said the king's fool to him one day, "I put Charles's name down in my list of fools, the day I heard he had entered France." "But if I let him go free," said the king, "what then?" "Why then, sire, I shall scratch out his name, and put down yours." Charles, however, was permitted to pass safely on his way. The death of the young prince to whom Milan had been promised, a few years afterwards, set the emperor free from his engagement to cede it ; and the two sovereigns finally terminated the hostilities of twenty-five years by the treaty of Crespy (1544). The English had taken Boulogne ; some unimportant hostilities at sea followed between the two nations, closed in 1546 by the treaty of Guisnes, which stipulated that Boulogne should be restored on the payment of 2,000,000 crowns to England.

This treaty was the last measure of foreign policy in



the reign of Francis. His domestic administration was closed by the extermination of a remarkably blameless people. Beyond their valleys, the Vaudois had extended themselves through some districts of Provence, in which they had colonized the town of Merindol, and about thirty villages, the chief of which was Cabrières. The archbishop of Aix, in 1540, denounced this portion of his diocese as heretical to the parliament of Provence; and the parliament responded by an edict directing that Merindol and its environs should be burned, demolished, and otherwise rendered uninhabitable. The governor of Provence, however, refused to execute this savage ordinance, without express authority from the king; to whom he represented that this Vaudois population was "irreproachable in morals, industrious, loyal, and benevolent. Agriculture," he added, "was their pride and sole occupation, and their 'marvellous diligence' had almost centupled the value of the lands they tilled." But they did "not acknowledge the benefit to be derived from pilgrimages, &c., nor say mass either for the living or the dead." On a former occasion, in the reign of Louis XII., that king had been solicited to destroy his Vaudois subjects: he had thereupon made strict inquiry into their manner of life; and having heard it, had exclaimed, "They are better Christians than I and my people;" and left them unmolested. Not so Francis I. "I do not burn heretics in France," he replied, "that they may be nourished in the Alps." But a trifling circumstance delayed the execution of the royal edict for their destruction, until the first president of the parliament of Provence, a man who was not without some sense of equity and humanity, had died, leaving his authority to a Baron d'Oppéda, who had a private pique against their chief landlord and protector. Oppéda, during the absence of the governor, united the military command of the province to his extensive civil power; and having availed himself of this circumstance to surround the devoted territory with troops, ere its inhabitants were aware of



their danger ; he shot, burned, or massacred with more aggravated horrors, the whole of the population, amounting to near 5,000 persons old and young ; 700 men only being reserved for galley-slaves.

This wholesale and atrocious butchery of a people so harmless and so useful, was too much, as yet, for the temper of the French nation. D'Oppéda was generally execrated ; but the king forbade the judges to bring him to trial.

A few months afterwards, Francis died, March 31st, 1547. He had reigned thirty-three years. His second son, Henry, alone survived him. In his last moments, the dying king charged his successor to lighten the burdens which he had laid upon his people ; an injunction so often uttered by departing monarchs, and so seldom obeyed by the inheritors of their crown.

Francis established the Royal Printing-press of France ; and founded a college, to which he attracted learned men from various countries. He would fain have placed Erasmus at its head ; but that most illustrious scholar of the day could not be prevailed upon by any offers to exchange his liberty for the king's favours. The reign of this sovereign is distinguished as having been, in an especial degree, the period of the "*Renaissance*," or Revival of Literature and the Arts ; and the munificence which he extended to several eminent men, his literary tastes, his aspirations after military glory and extended dominion, together with the brilliancy of his court, gave Francis I. a renown and popularity which has cast a certain veil over his inhuman and unscrupulous despotism.

It must be noted as, perhaps, the only beneficial act recorded of the corrupt prime minister, Duprat, that he induced the states of Brittany, which, though united to the crown, was still governed as an independent dukedom, to solicit incorporation with the kingdom ; thereby preventing the danger of future separation and civil war. Henceforward, Brittany was reckoned only as one of the provinces of the kingdom (1532).

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

Character and Impolitic Measures of Henry II.—Insurrection of Bordeaux.—Rapacity of the Courtiers.—The Guises.—Acquisition of the Three Bishoprics by France: Siege of Metz.—Defeat of St. Quentin.—Capture of Calais.—Peace of Cateau-Cambresis: Persecuting Designs nourished by France and Spain: Arrest of Anne du Bourg.—Death of the King.

FROM 1547 A.D. TO 1559.

HENRY II. was twenty-nine years of age when he succeeded to the throne. His father's last injunctions were that he should continue in office two ministers whose prudence had begun to restore prosperity to the finances of the State, and that he should beware of the ambition of the Guises, and the dangerous counsels of the constable de Montmorency, and exclude them from power. Henry entirely disregarded his father's advice: he dismissed the ministers whom Francis had trusted, surrendered himself to the prompting of Montmorency, and allowed the Guises, his wife Catherine de Medicis, and his mistress Diana of Poitiers, to divide his court into factions, whose rivalries and animosities brought unspeakable misery on the kingdom in the reigns of his sons. Henry has, in fact, been described as a mere carpet-knight; indolent and luxurious, qualified to excel in the dance and the tournament, but unfit for action in the field, or deliberation in the council-chamber. His character, however, wanted the outward adornment of elegance and courtesy, which had oftentimes made men forget the faults of his father; and the gross licentiousness of his life and court was unrelieved by the refinements which had disguised the vices of his predecessor.

Like his father, Henry was jealous of the emperor.

Like Francis too, he coveted a share of Italy; and like him, without the excuse either of devout belief or of bigoted hatred, he was a merciless persecutor of the men who had imbibed the doctrine preached by Luther or by Calvin, as the readiest way of securing the favour and courting the alliance of the pope.

Five years of peace followed his accession. The emperor was engaged in the subjugation of the German Protestants; and Henry, with nothing to fear from external assailants, had time, if he would have used it, to seek the peace and internal prosperity of his kingdom. But the first year of his accession was marked by tyrannical edicts, which substituted an arbitrary tribunal for the legal authority of the Parliament, in a great variety of criminal causes; thus placing the lives of the people at the mercy of judges who were to sentence and condemn without appeal. The magistrates remonstrated, but were compelled to yield. Heavy taxation was imposed; and the provinces beyond the Loire, where the salt duty had been introduced by Francis at the close of his reign, broke into open revolt. At Bordeaux, especially, the populace took the law into their own hands, and tore in pieces the commander of the garrison who attempted to enforce obedience. The king promised them justice, and redress of grievances; they were appeased, and the parliament of Bordeaux punished the leaders of the sedition. But Montmorency appeared ere long, sent by the king to punish the whole city. The citizens brought him the keys of their town. "There are my keys," he said, pointing to the cannon he had brought with him, for he was attended by a force of 10,000 men, like a general going to attack an enemy's fortress. He caused a number of the chief inhabitants to be put to death, some of them with atrocious tortures; one hundred and twenty others were condemned to dig up *with their nails* the mangled remains of the murdered officer. An enormous fine was imposed on the city, and all its municipal privileges were withdrawn. Similar proceedings

marked the progress of Montmorency through all the revolted provinces.

With all this rigour in enforcing taxation, the royal treasury was constantly empty ; for the men and women who surrounded the king were greedy, even beyond the customary rapacity of the court. Spies were kept ever on the watch to inform them if any holders of place or pension were sick, and likely to die, that not a moment might be lost in begging for the reversion of those advantages : physicians were kept in pay for the same purpose, and had the reputation of hastening the end of their patients, when a handsome gratuity might be expected to reward the welcome tidings of the sick man's death. The courts of justice became a market for the spoilers. Wretches were suborned to accuse rich men of treasonable practices, and the charge was eagerly pressed until the accused purchased safety by payment of a large bribe. Cruelty went hand in hand with covetousness ; for all the court factions were fierce haters and relentless persecutors of the reforming party. The judges generally became their tools ; suspected persons were interrogated by torture, and the court in which magistrates of the parliament of Paris tried heretics was so unsparing of condemnation, that it acquired the name of "The Court of Fire."

The Guises, who took a large share in the general plunder, were descended from a younger branch of the ducal house of Lorraine. Claude of Lorraine had won the favour of Francis I., who created him duke of Guise, and a peer of France ; but soon regretted, and would fain, had it been possible, have undone his own work, perceiving that he had planted in his kingdom a family whose eager wide-reaching ambition was likely to endanger the throne of his descendants. The duke became the father of six sons, of whom the eldest, Francis of Guise, was a skilful, irascible, and unscrupulous soldier ; the second, Charles, afterwards cardinal of Lorraine, was equally remarkable for personal cowardice, and for insinuating manners, keen

discernment of the path to fortune, and an ambition which in the troublous days to come would dream of nothing less than the crown for his brother's head, and the papal tiara for his own.

In the year 1551, Maurice of Saxony, who had appeared to be the willing instrument of Charles V. in subjugating the Protestant princes of Germany, turned against him, and made a secret treaty with France. Maurice's design, which he carried out with extraordinary policy and entire success, was to secure the Protestant religion and the liberties of the German empire from the tyrannical encroachments of Charles. The assistance of the king of France was not needed in the conflict by which Maurice effected his object; but Henry nevertheless derived from it a very important accession of territory. He had stipulated, as the condition of his alliance with the German Protestants, that he should take possession of the city of Cambrai, and the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun; and he seized them at the decisive moment when Maurice was triumphing over the emperor, and obliging him to conclude the treaty of Passau (1552).

The emperor reclaimed the cities in vain; he raised a large army and laid siege to Metz, which was defended with extraordinary skill by the duke of Guise, who had, however, been obliged to demolish more than twenty churches and abbeys, and to destroy the suburbs of the town, in order to throw up additional fortifications. The besiegers began their operations on the 30th October, 1552. Rains, succeeded by hard frost, set in; and in two months 30,000 men had perished miserably by cold and sickness. "Fortune is but a woman," said Charles V., "she favours the young king rather than the old emperor." And on the 1st January, 1553, he gave orders to raise the siege, and departed, leaving behind him a multitude of miserable, dying, half-frozen soldiers, whom there was no means of carrying away, and who begged pitifully that they might be put out of their pain at once.



Three years of war, with mingled success and disaster, in Piedmont, Flanders, Picardy, and Lorraine followed. Charles abdicated the crown of Spain to his son Philip II., in October, 1555; and with Philip, in that year, Henry signed the treaty of Vaucelles. But at the same time he signed a *secret* treaty at Rome, with Pope Paul IV., who promised to give him the investiture of the kingdom of Naples; and thus rendered a fresh war with Spain inevitable, for Philip had succeeded to Naples and Sicily, as part of the possessions of the Spanish crown. His marriage with Queen Mary of England drew that power also into war with France, and a chosen body of 7,000 men joined the Spanish army, commanded by Philibert, duke of Savoy, whom France had robbed of his dominions, and assisted in the famous battle of St. Quentin, 10th August, 1557, in which the French were defeated with great loss. The road to Paris lay open to Philip, had he chosen to advance at once; his undecided, over-cautious temper robbed him of the fruit of his victory, and he would not move till he had taken the half-ruined fortress of St. Quentin, and the brave Admiral Coligny, with but a small garrison, held it out against the besieging army for seventeen days. By the end of that time, the duke of Guise had been recalled from Italy, whither Henry had sent him to attack the Spanish possessions. He marched towards Flanders, where another Spanish army, under Count Egmont, threatened France; but suddenly, at the close of December, turned towards Calais, and surrounded it, on the 1st January, 1558. The government of Queen Mary had so neglected the place, that it had but 800 men in garrison, and an eight days' siege placed it in possession of the assailants, to the great rejoicing of France, which regained in Calais the key of her territory, and had little comparatively to fear henceforward on the score of invasion from England. Calais had been 210 years an English possession.

The taking of Calais added very considerably to the renown and influence of the duke of Guise. The great-



ness of the family of Lorraine received a new accession, when their niece Mary Stuart (daughter of Mary of Lorraine and James V. of Scotland) was married to Francis, the Dauphin, September 28th, 1558. As soon as this marriage had been duly celebrated with great magnificence at Paris, negotiations were set on foot for a general peace, which was finally concluded at Cateau-Cambresis, on the 3rd April, 1559. By the treaty, France retained the cities and districts of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which were formed into a province under the name of the Three Bishoprics; the towns and fortresses taken by the French in Italy were surrendered, with the exception of some places in Piedmont, which Henry agreed to restore at the end of a few years. He renounced by this treaty all his claims on Naples, and other Italian territories; and thus closed the wars with Italy, which had lasted sixty-five years, without bringing to France any advantages to compensate for the waste of so much blood and treasure, while they had inflicted unspeakable misery on Italy. They had, however, produced an important effect on the internal policy of France; for the constant employment and maintenance of a large standing army during so many years, had greatly increased and strengthened the authority of the throne.

Happy would it have been for France if the exemption she was about to enjoy from foreign warfare had been improved for purposes of peace and good government at home. But the treaty of alliance just concluded between France and Spain, and which was cemented by the marriage of Henry's sister, Margaret, to the duke of Savoy, and of his daughter Elizabeth (a princess only thirteen years of age) to Philip II., had been promoted by the Spanish sovereign, and readily concluded by the French, for the sake of combining their efforts against the Protestants. The cardinal of Lorraine, on the side of France, and Perrenot (afterwards Cardinal Granvelle), with the duke of Alva on behalf of Spain, had discussed and arranged the means of extirpating heresy; but it was

agreed that, for the present, these designs must be concealed, in order to insure their success.

Accidentally, they became known to one of the illustrious persons who were most deeply interested in their discomfiture. William of Nassau, prince of Orange, was sent to Paris, at the head of the hostages for the observance of the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis. He was received with the respect due to his high descent, and treated by the king of France with unreserved freedom, as one of the most beloved and confidential servants of the late emperor Charles V., under whose eye he had been brought up. Knowing that William had been privy to all the thoughts of that sagacious monarch, and supposing that he was admitted into the most secret councils of Philip as he had been into those of his father, Henry spoke to him as to a man who knew the secret understanding between the crowns for the extirpation of heresy. "William spoke little, which his ordinary modesty and taciturnity enabled him to do without affectation. He thus concealed his ignorance, and suffered the French monarch gradually to betray the full extent of the designs of the royal allies. 'I heard,' says the prince, 'from the mouth of King Henry, that the duke of Alva had agreed with the French ministers on the means of exterminating all who were suspected of Protestantism, in France, in the Netherlands, and throughout Christendom, by the universal establishment of an inquisition worse and more cruel than that of Spain.' Henry had then no suspicion that William secretly inclined to the cause of the Reformation, which was embraced by some branches of his family; and that Philip disliked and distrusted the favourite of his father, who was now confined to missions or employments of magnificent parade, but was excluded from those mysterious counsels on which Perrenot and Alva only were consulted."

The king had already caused the clergy to purchase of him a decree of inquisition; but he had taken this step chiefly as a means of obtaining money, for the Parliament

of Paris, jealous of its authority, would not endure that another tribunal should be created for the purpose of searching out and punishing heresy; and although the pope had appointed an inquisitor for France, that officer was not allowed to enter on his functions. The Parliament itself displayed great zeal in persecution. Yet even among its magistrates and counsellors there were some who ardently desired a reform in the national faith and worship, and others who, without objection or misgiving concerning the creed in which they had been brought up, pleaded for the toleration of religious differences which involved no crime against the laws of the land.

Even these moderate and cautious counsels were received with vehement indignation by the party most in credit at court; and the cardinal of Lorraine persuaded the king to visit the Parliament himself, that he might hold a *bed of justice*,\* and propose a *mercuriale*,† for the censure of certain magistrates who had allowed some persons convicted of heresy to escape death, and who were believed to hold Lutheran opinions themselves.

“Were it only to show the king of Spain that you are firmly rooted in the faith, sire,” urged the cardinal, “you should arrest half a dozen of those counsellors, and have them publicly burnt for Lutheran heretics, as they are. It will be a pledge and foretaste of your good intentions, gratifying to the princes and grandees of Spain who have accompanied the duke of Alva hither to solemnize and honour the espousals of their king with the princess. And be sure that if you do not give timely heed to the cutting off those tainted members from the Parliament,

\* When the king, seated on his throne in the Parliament, presided over the proceedings, he was said to hold a *bed of justice*.

† A conference composed of the presidents of the Chambers and other principal magistrates, together with a deputation from the counsellors, who met, once in three months, to review the conduct of the members of their body, and, if necessary, to bring any offending magistrate to trial. These conferences were called *Mercuriales*, because they met on Wednesday (*dies Mercurii*).

you will soon have the whole body infected, down to the very clerks and door-keepers."

The king proceeded to put these counsels in execution the very next morning ; going to the Parliament in great state, with a numerous company of prelates, cardinals, and noblemen, escorted by the whole body of his guards. Having taken his seat beneath the dais in the great chamber, he commanded his attorney-general to open the *Mercuriale*. That officer immediately attacked by name five or six magistrates. The most eminent of the accused, Anne du Bourg, replied with undaunted courage, though with all respect to the king, that many crying sins, blasphemy, adultery, perjury, stalked abroad at noon-day, unabashed and unpunished, while new and unheard-of penalties were devised against men who, innocent of crime, raised the torch of Scripture to discover by its light the corruptions of Rome. He implored the king to use his utmost efforts for the convention of a council which should search out and correct the manifold abuses of the Church ; and advised that proceedings against persons suspected of heresy should be suspended until due pains had been taken to restore purity of faith and worship. Some other speakers ventured to support Du Bourg. But the first president of the Parliament, on the other hand, recommended the king to consider the pious example of Philip Augustus, who had commanded six hundred heretics to be burned in his own presence in a single day. And Henry, to whom this advice was highly congenial, swore passionately that he would see Du Bourg at least burnt before six days were over ; and having given orders for his immediate arrest and that of some other magistrates, he desired the Parliament to perform what yet remained to be done, and withdrew. The magistrates arrested belonged to the best families in Paris, and were so highly esteemed for their probity and conscientious administration of justice to all parties, that their imprisonment occasioned much discontent.

Henry was not destined to witness the punishment

which he designed to inflict on them. On the last day of a tournament held in honour of his daughter's marriage, he insisted on encountering in the lists Montgomery, the captain of his Scottish guard. Montgomery, as though actuated by a presentiment of evil, strove to evade the honour, but the king would not be refused, and the encounter proved fatal to him. Wounded accidentally in the eye by the broken lance of his antagonist, he languished several days under the effects of the injury, and at length died of it (June, 1559), at the age of forty-one. He left four young sons, of whom three in succession reigned after him.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Francis II.—Fate of Du Bourg.—Strength of the Huguenots ;  
Coligny : Condé.—Catherine de Medici.—Conspiracy of Amboise.  
—Arrest of Condé.—Death of the King.

1559–1560.

FRANCIS II., a sickly feeble-minded youth of sixteen, succeeded his father, but could scarcely be said to reign. He was passionately fond of his young and beautiful queen, Mary Stuart, and through her influence, her uncles, the Guises, established entire sway over him, and became virtually the masters of the State. Under their administration all the religious and political animosities which divided the people became more bitter ; and all parties began to collect their resources and measure their strength, for the long and terrible struggle, which, under the name of "*Wars of Religion*," was to afflict the land during thirty-seven years, covering France with blood and ruins.

The trial of Du Bourg was pushed forward as eagerly as could consist with attention to forms of law, the substance of which was wholly violated by the process. He had been used with extraordinary severity in the Bastile, even to the being inclosed in one of those iron cages, the detestable invention of a favourite of Louis XI. But when it was perceived that no rigours availed to shake his constancy, he was at length brought to the stake ; this mitigation, however, being permitted, that he should be strangled before he was burnt. His fate had excited extraordinary interest abroad as well as in France ; several of the German princes remonstrating earnestly against this unjust persecution of a man whose rare



talents and yet rare integrity caused him to be loved, wept, and honoured by many who differed most widely from him in religion. His judges themselves had been greatly moved by the eloquent and Christian exhortation with which he bade them cheerfully farewell; and the Chancellor Olivier, whom terror of the Guises constrained against his conscience to condemn the prisoner, was miserably harassed with remorse.

If it was hoped by the execution of Du Bourg to quiet the furious agitation which prevailed in Paris, the anticipation proved futile. The violence of the populace had become unmanageable; and the most frightful outrages disgraced the streets of the capital, where the search for heretics was made a pretext for almost general pillage. The patience of the Reformed was nearly exhausted. Hitherto the Protestants, or as they began to be called, the *Huguenots*,\* had been regarded solely as religious dissidents, but they were now about to assume a more formidable political character. Notwithstanding their sufferings and persecutions, their numbers had increased beyond all expectation.

From Boulogne to Bayonne, from Brest to Metz, France teemed with proselytes to the new doctrine; men accustomed to danger, bold, zealous, constant, and unshrinking, bound by strong ties among themselves, and maintaining an intimate, though secret correspondence with the Protestants of Switzerland and Germany. Give them but a fitting head and chief to direct their movements, and they were prepared to unite in meeting force by force, and to demand, or even perhaps extort, enfranchisement from the oppression under which they chafed.

One serious difficulty, however, here interposed itself. Calvin had taught, that no outrage upon human liberty, however grievous, if committed by rulers acting under authority ordained by God, might lawfully be resisted by

\* From a corruption of the German word *eidgenossen* (*conjurates*), which had been popularly abbreviated into *eignots*, to designate the partisans of liberty in the republic of Geneva.

a Christian man ; and the French Protestants had adopted this doctrine. But how was the liberty which they coveted to be won, except by open resistance to the government ? And how could open resistance be reconciled with that doctrine of passive obedience which they had admitted as a fundamental principle of their religion ? Long and gravely was this question argued by Protestant divines and civilians. They agreed at last, that the king, owing to his youth, had no power of governing for himself ; that the Guises had usurped all authority from him ; and that *against those tyrants*, and to deliver the sovereign and the country from their oppression, every means of attack was lawful. This reasoning was not very conclusive ; since it was by the consent of the young king himself, that the Guises exercised sovereign authority in his name ; but, such as it was, it dispelled the scruples of the Huguenots, who in truth had almost every motive which honest men and patriots could have, to induce them to resist the tyranny of their oppressors.

Amongst those who, nevertheless, hesitated long before they would enter on any course of action which might entail on their country the horrors of civil war, was one of the bravest and most illustrious Huguenot leaders, the Admiral Coligny. Coligny was one of the three sons of the count de Châtillon and the sister of the constable Montmorency. His high birth and eminent qualities had early introduced him to posts of honour and emolument. But during the protracted captivity which he endured as a prisoner of war after the battle of St. Quentin, Coligny devoted his enforced leisure to a profound study of Holy Scripture, and became possessed with so strong a sense of the vanity of earthly wealth and distinction, that on his return to freedom he gave up all the lucrative offices in the state which he had previously enjoyed, retaining only his titular rank as admiral of France. In the domestic privacy to which he retired, he became an example of the most severe self-discipline united to a fervent habitual devotion, which by no means

impaired his natural warmth and frankness. "In the wars into which he was afterwards drawn, nothing was wanting to his glory but *success*, for he was an unfortunate commander, and, though a braver man never drew his sword, yet in the critical moments of battle he was deficient in decision and promptitude." His younger brother, Francis d'Andelôt, likewise became a gallant but ill-fated soldier in the Huguenot ranks. His elder brother, Odet Châtillon, who had been made a cardinal at sixteen, and at a later period, bishop of Beauvais, also embraced the Reformed doctrine; and ended his days in England.

In respect of rank, the natural chief of the Huguenot cause was Antony de Bourbon, who by marriage with Jane d'Albret had inherited the title of king of Navarre. Antony at this time professed the Reformed faith, of which his wife was a zealous adherent; but he was no honour to any cause: a weak, pusillanimous prince, who seems to have oscillated between the teaching of Rome and that of Calvin, without seriously embracing either. His high rank, however, as first prince of the blood royal, made the Guises dread him as a possible rival, and they contrived that he should be treated with coldness, and almost with insult, in the hope of disgusting him with the court. Antony was too spiritless or too time-serving to resent the slights which were offered him; his brother Louis, prince of Condé, was of a very different temper. He, too, had suffered many mortifications, and some substantial injuries, through the enmity of the Guises. Under an appearance of carelessness and frivolity, he nourished an ardent, lofty, and indomitable spirit, and his resentment for the affronts which had been put upon him, combined with the entreaties of his wife, who was herself a Protestant, to make him embrace communion with the Huguenots, because they, too, desired to effect a change in the government, though actuated by motives different from his own. Accordingly, without much considering the

religious aspect of the change, Condé avowed himself a convert to Protestantism; and in virtue of his royal blood and commanding character, at once became the head and leader of the Protestant party.

Amongst the leaders on the other side, next to the Guises, was Catherine de Medicis, the queen-mother, who had not yet displayed her character in its true colours. One of the most accomplished dissemblers who ever lived, she appeared indifferent to power, while secretly aiming at supreme authority, and employing any and every means to attain it. During her husband's reign, she had cultivated with seeming affection the society of some of the most eminent partisans of the Reformation, and she still professed high esteem and regard for Coligny, for the queen of Navarre, and others. But it was merely that she might use them to counterpoise the influence which the Guises had acquired, and destroy them when they had served her turn. Towards the Guises, on the other hand, she exhibited every mark of friendship and confidence, while secretly resenting with bitterness the empire they had established over her son's mind and kingdom, disappointing her own ambitious hope of reigning under his name.

The real aim and hope of the Guises, it was suspected, was to set aside the reigning family altogether. They prided themselves on their descent from a grandson of Charlemagne; and their partisans drew invidious comparisons between the feeble, sickly family of princes, who represented on the throne of France the line of "the usurper Hugh Capet," and the sons of the house of Lorraine, accomplished in arms or in council, and possessing in large measure the noble presence, the popular oratory, and all the other arts and accomplishments which are apt to win the favour of the multitude. They had made many malcontents, however, especially among the gentry and soldiers of fortune who had served in the wars of Henry II., and to many of whom the government was indebted for long arrears of pay, &c., the withholding of

which had reduced them to utter penury. Their applications for payment or relief were repelled by the cardinal of Lorraine with a haughtiness which added insult to injury, and sent them away from the court with vengeance in their hearts, prepared to join any party, Catholic or heretic, which afforded them an opportunity of striking a blow at the Guises.

A great conspiracy was, in fact, set on foot. It embraced men of various creeds, and actuated by very diverse motives : but all agreed in this, that the king should be removed altogether from the influence of his uncles, the Guises, and that the latter should be brought to judgment on the charge of high treason. The conspirators bound themselves by oath not to attempt anything against the king, or the queen, or the lawful authorities of the country. The court was residing at Blois for the king's health, and the conspirators had resolved to carry out their plot at that place, on a certain day in March, 1560. To this end, the leaders directed numerous bands of armed men to meet in the neighbourhood of the city, at the time appointed, though without informing them of the service for which they were required. But a false friend betrayed the whole plot to the Guises, who hastily transferred the king and court from Blois to the castle of Amboise. Nothing daunted, however, a party of the conspirators persevered in their attempt, hopeless as it was, now that they had lost the advantage of taking their enemies by surprise. The consequences were a most frightful butchery. The Guises seized a multitude of men who had come to Blois as they were directed, without knowing wherefore ; besides a great number of higher rank, some of whom surrendered on a promise of safety, which was violated without scruple. The streets of Amboise were reddened with blood, and the waters of the Loire carried down a ghastly burden of corpses, day after day, for several weeks. The prisoners of more illustrious rank were put to death with more elaborate formalities, in presence of the king, the two queens, and all the ladies



and officers of their court; for, says a contemporary writer, "the court being deprived of its usual amusements out of doors at this time, care was taken to diversify as much as possible these tragic executions, for their entertainment." The young king remarked with some feeling that he did not hear any of the dying men speak of *his* name with reproach, but only of his uncles'; and the mother of the Guises fled from the sight, prophesying that vengeance would surely fall ere long on the heads of her own sons. So much blood shed for mere revenge, when all danger from the conspiracy was dissipated, shocked every humane person; but most of all were the Guises reproached for the judicial murder of the baron de Castelnau, and some other gentlemen of high rank and character, who had been treated with peculiar faithlessness. Again the chancellor Olivier had been induced to gratify the Guises, and do despite to his own conscience, in the condemnation of these prisoners; but he could no longer stifle his remorse. He fell into a profound melancholy and despair, which brought him to his grave. The cardinal of Lorraine visited him while dying, but Olivier recoiled from the sight, turned his face to the wall, and cried out in accents of terror, "Cardinal! you have brought us all into damnation with yourself!" He presently afterwards expired in great distress and fear.

The vacant chancellorship was bestowed on Michael L'Hôpital, one of the wisest and most upright men who have ever adorned the French magistracy. To his humane opposition was owing the failure of a project entertained by the cardinal of Lorraine to establish the inquisition in France; but to avoid this greater evil, he was compelled to assent to an edict which transferred the trial of heretics from the civil magistrates to the bishops, and which forbade all assemblies of the Protestants, under penalties similar to those inflicted for high treason.

With all these precautions, however, the Guises felt that their power was insecure so long as Condé was at large. They had been unable to convict him of parti-



cipation in the conspiracy of Amboise, though well aware that he must have had some share in the plot. The prince had, in fact, been the *real* chief of the confederacy, but his name had never been mentioned otherwise than as "the Silent Captain;" and after some detention at Amboise, he was suffered to depart to his own house.

It had become necessary to find means of replenishing the royal treasury, and the Guises shrinking from the convention of the States-general, caused the king to convoke the princes, councillors of state, and other great personages, to meet at Fontainebleau, to consider the wants of the kingdom. Condé and his brother Navarre excused themselves from attendance, suspecting that some stratagem would be employed to detain them prisoners; the other chief persons of both parties obeyed the summons, but came in arms, and attended by a numerous following. Coligny presented a petition to the assembly from 50,000 Protestants in Normandy, who expressed their willingness to grant any supplies which the king needed, but prayed that they might have liberty to erect churches and worship God according to their own conscience. In the debate which ensued, Montluc, bishop of Valence, pleaded strongly for toleration. He bore testimony to the learning and irreproachable character of the Protestant preachers, who, he added, had found the people as sheep left without any shepherds to guide them, so great had been the neglect of the pastors of the Church. Nor could any Reformer have urged more strongly the necessity of correcting the abuses of the Church, and the cruel injustice of persecuting men who, from no other motive than an honest desire to find the true way of salvation, had embraced Protestant doctrine, than did this candid and tolerant prelate. The assembly generally, however, were little prepared for such liberal sentiments; but they advised the convocation of the States-general as the best method of promoting peace, and providing for the wants of the country. The Guises were forced to acquiesce, but they resolved that the meeting of the States should be

the means of destroying Condé. They foresaw that he could not refuse to attend this great national assembly without risking an open quarrel with the king, and Condé did in fact repair to the place appointed, though warned again and again, through various channels, that he would do so at his peril. He was arrested immediately on his arrival, and sternly informed by the king that he was accused of treason and must justify himself. Hastily tried by a tribunal which did not dare to acquit, he would have been beheaded in a week, if the king's fatal illness and death had not intervened.

Francis II. died on the 5th December, 1560, after a reign of seventeen months; and the crown of France passed to his brother, Charles IX., a boy ten years old.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

Charles IX.—Policy of the Queen-mother.—The Triumvirate.—Colloquy of Poissy.—Massacre of Vassy, and Commencement of the Wars of Religion, 1562.—Murder of Guise, 1563.—Battle of Jarnac, and Assassination of Condé, 1569.—Henry of Navarre appears as the Champion of the Protestants.

FROM 1560 A.D. TO 1569.

IN the last days of Francis II., the queen-mother, bent on obtaining for herself the power which the Guises had wielded during the reign of the dying king, adroitly temporized with all parties ; assured the Guises that she considered their interests as identical with her own, and that it was necessary for all their sakes that they should be reconciled with the Bourbons, whose followers were many, and yet more resolute than numerous ; worked upon the fears and hopes of the feeble-minded but ambitious king of Navarre, so that she prevailed upon him to renounce his claim to the Regency during the minority of Charles ; and finally, causing Condé to be brought into the chamber of her son, together with his two mortal enemies, Guise and Lorraine, she prompted the dying youth to say that the steps taken against the prince were entirely owing to his own wish, and contrary to the advice of the duke and the cardinal.

False as Condé must have believed this declaration to be, it was impossible for him to contradict it at such a time, and by the desire of the queen-mother, the forms of a reconciliation were gone through by the bedside of the king shortly before he expired. The duke of Guise departing not long afterwards from the court to escort his widowed niece, Mary of Scotland, on her way to her own kingdom, the danger of an immediate rupture was averted ; but though liberated from danger and arrest, the

prince by no means forgot who had been foremost in pressing his imprisonment and condemnation.

In the mean time Catherine de Medicis, who had hitherto taken no part ostensibly in public affairs, found herself advanced to supreme power. The young king Charles on his first meeting with the council of state, begged them to receive orders from the queen-mother as from himself; and these words, expressing, as it seemed, the natural leaning of a boy ten years old on his surviving parent, were powerfully seconded by the counsels of the chancellor L'Hôpital, who, like every one else, had conceived a far more favourable opinion of Catherine than she deserved. Having no personal following nearly so strong as that which severally belonged to the leaders of the two hostile factions, she made it her policy to play them off against each other, dreading the triumph of either as adverse to her own power, and utterly indifferent to the crime and the misery which grew out of the protracted struggle.

In pursuance of this policy, the king of Navarre was appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and the constable Montmorency, whom jealousy of the Guises had kept at a distance during the last reign, was recalled to court, and treated with high favour. The Guises looked abroad for supporters, and secretly concluded a close alliance with Philip II. of Spain, who already in the reign of Francis had professed his willingness to send an armed force for the support of the king and his ministers against the malcontents. Meanwhile the States-general, assembled in May, 1561, and containing in their ranks many deputies of Huguenot principles, had recommended the exclusion of the Guises, *as being foreigners*,\* from the royal council. Adverting to the debts of the crown and the disorder of the national finances, they had further urged that the king should resume the extravagant donations of royal property which Henry II. had made

\* Lorraine was not at that time a part of the kingdom of France.

to the constable Montmorency, and other favourites of his court. This recommendation so deeply offended the constable that he threw himself altogether into the party of the Guises, and became one of the most formidable enemies of the Huguenots, including his own brave and noble-minded nephews, Coligny and D'Andelôt. The marshal St. André, another favourite courtier of Henry II., and one on whom the royal bounty had been lavishly bestowed, likewise joined the Guise faction; and the union of these three, the duke of Guise, the constable, and St. André, is known in the history of those times as the Triumvirate, a name bestowed on it to assimilate it to the detestable confederacies so called in ancient Rome.

The first measures of the new reign towards the Huguenots were marked by some degree of toleration, but in July, 1561, an edict of a very different character appeared; forbidding all assemblies, public or private, armed or unarmed, for any other worship than that of the Church of Rome; the only merciful provision was that imprisonment, banishment, and confiscation should be the penalties for disobedience, and not death by burning or otherwise.

The States-general met again in the course of the year; but it had been proposed by the cardinal of Lorraine, that the clergy should assemble apart from the other two orders, to review the condition of the Church; and that the king should give permission to the most noted theologians among the French Protestants to appear before them, and discuss the points on which they differed from the Church of Rome. The cardinal, who had some learning and much eloquence, expected to derive great fame from this controversy. The Reformed, on their part, longed to have an opportunity of stating publicly in the presence of the authorities in church and state what they really did believe, and refuting the many misrepresentations which their adversaries had set forth; and they accepted the cardinal's challenge eagerly. Twelve of their ministers, together with Beza and Peter Martyr,

who came from Switzerland for that purpose, attended the conference. The French bishops and clergy, on the other hand, were not, in general, disposed to join the assembly, and out of one hundred and thirty prelates who had been summoned, not more than fifty obeyed the call. Amongst those who came, however, were Montluc and a few others sincerely bent on promoting the interests of their country, by reforming the evils existing in their own Church, and, if possible, uniting with it all sincere lovers of truth and goodness.

True to her policy of courting all parties in turn, Beza was received at the court by Catherine with much distinction. He was by birth a Frenchman, of noble parentage, elegant manners, and many personal accomplishments; and being also gifted with much learning, eloquence, and presence of mind, no more powerful advocate of the Huguenot principles could have been selected. The cardinal of Lorraine at first professed great satisfaction with the reasonings and opinions of Beza, and was profuse in expressions of good-will; but it soon appeared, that the differences of belief which separated the two parties were too wide to be reconciled. After several conferences, Catherine proposed that since neither party appeared likely to convert the other, they should depute some of their number to draw up a declaration concerning the Eucharist which they could all agree to accept. Accordingly, Montluc on one side and Beza on the other, each assisted by four of his brethren, drew up a statement in which they agreed, and which when shown to the cardinal, he highly approved. But not so his brethren generally; they pronounced the declaration of the united deputies to be heretical; and the cardinal, owning that he thought his brother-divines more clear-sighted than himself, retracted his consent to it. Thus ended the disputation, distinguished, from the town where it was held, as the *Colloquy of Poissy*.

The result of the controversy was not encouraging; it seemed only to have fixed each party more immovably in



their own views. But the queen continued to testify favour to the Huguenot leaders ; enjoined Beza to remain yet some time longer in France ; and declared that notwithstanding the edict which prohibited Protestant worship, she by no means desired to prevent it, even in Paris. The prohibition had, in fact, been constantly broken through ; though not without occasional interruption and tumult raised by the populace, always ready for an attack on the Huguenots ; and a few months after the Colloquy of Poissy, L'Hôpital, with the sanction of the queen, procured the passing of a more equitable enactment. The new decree permitted the Protestants to meet for worship *outside* the walls of towns, unarmed ; it enjoined their ministers not to attack the rites of the Catholic Church in their sermons, or to preach anything contrary to the Nicene Creed and the Scriptures, and it bound them to desist from labour on the various holy days appointed by the Church, to pay tithe duly to the priests, &c. &c. Beza and all the wisest leaders of the Reformed urged their brethren to enjoy the measure of toleration which was now afforded them in thankful and loyal obedience ; reminding them that "the Christian warfare demanded only spiritual weapons, namely, prayer and patience, against the enemies of Truth." But amongst the two thousand Huguenot congregations scattered over France, there were many fiery spirits, more disposed to resent the restrictions imposed on them, than to be thankful for the advantages conferred ; while the Catholics generally murmured that the government was favouring the heretics, and several of the provincial parliaments refused to register the edict. Even that of Paris consented to do so with extreme reluctance, and not until positively commanded by the young king, at the prompting of his mother.

It was too evident that peace would not be of long duration. With the help of the king of Spain, who held out a promise of the island of Sardinia as a bribe to the weak yet ambitious prince, the Guises had detached the

king of Navarre from the Huguenots, and were covertly mustering all their forces for a deadly struggle. The commencement of the War of Religion is dated, however, from an accidental encounter between the duke of Guise's attendants and a Huguenot congregation in Champagne. In March, 1562, the duke, journeying to Paris from his estate at Joinville, passed through the neighbouring town of Vassy, on Sunday morning, at the hour when the Protestants were meeting for worship. Some of his retinue entered the building where the people had assembled and began to revile them as "dogs" and "rebels." Words were followed by blows, and the armed followers of Guise, falling on the unarmed congregation, killed sixty persons and wounded two hundred before their master, who did not arrive on the spot till the conflict had begun, could make them desist from the work of slaughter.

As soon as this outrage, commonly called the massacre of Vassy, became generally known, the Huguenots by a common impulse began to take up arms. There was no hope of safety, they said, but in self-defence, since the Guises were strong enough to defy all the merciful intentions and edicts of the crown; for, at the time, hardly any one believed that the duke had not intended his men to attack the Huguenot congregation. In the space of a few weeks, a number of Protestant gentry, with their armed dependents, about fifteen hundred in all, were mustered under the prince of Condé, at Meaux. Coligny hesitated to join them. He shrank from taking the first step towards a civil war of which the results might be unspeakably disastrous both to his country and his cause. During two days he had resisted the urgency of his brothers, who pressed him to take up arms. On the third night he was awakened by the sobs of his wife, who wept not for herself, but because she thought her husband was forsaking the cause of Christ and of his people. "To be thus cautious and prudent according to man's wisdom," she said to him, "is not being wise towards God, for has

not He given you skill in war that you may use it for His children!" Coligny reminded her of his reasons for hesitation; and added, "Place your hand upon your heart, examine well your conscience, and see if you are prepared to encounter disaster, defeat, the insults of our foes, the treasons of false friends, flight, exile, hunger, what is harder still, the hunger and destitution of your children, perhaps death by the hands of the executioners after seeing your husband's body dragged through the streets and exposed to the insults of the populace. I will give you three weeks to consider of it." "My husband," rejoined the brave woman, "account the three weeks already expired. Many lives might be sacrificed by that delay; let not their blood be laid to your charge." The next morning, Coligny and his brothers set out together, and joined the Huguenot forces. Some place of strength was necessary to their safety, and Condé, by a rapid march took possession of Orleans, where he was received with open arms by the Huguenot citizens who were very numerous. Besides Orleans, Lyons, Poitiers, Tours, Blois, Bourges, Rouen, and the greatest part of Normandy, were soon in Condé's power; but although he had obtained a body of German horse, and induced Queen Elizabeth to assist him with men and money, on promise that the English should be put in possession of Havre, his army was still far too small to provide adequately for the defence of the cities he had taken. Meanwhile the triumvirate had obtained possession of the young king's person, and carried him from Fontainebleau to Paris, whither Catherine accompanied him. The king of Spain had sent them a body of experienced but ruthless soldiers, and they had also procured the help of the duke of Savoy.

The most exact discipline reigned in the Huguenot ranks; pillage was severely interdicted; prayers were read night and morning at the head of each regiment by its own minister; no cursing nor evil language was heard, no gambling nor persons of abandoned life seen in the camp. In numbers they were much inferior to their

antagonists, who being thus enabled to choose their own line of movement, took possession of Blois, Tours, and Bourges, stormed Poitiers, and invested Rouen, purposing to carry it before the promised English succours could arrive. The city was defended during a month with determined bravery, even women serving heroically in the ranks of the militia. Taken by storm at length, Rouen was given up for eight days and nights to the licence of a ferocious soldiery. The king of Navarre was killed in this siege ; at which Charles and his mother were also present. Halting between two creeds to the last, the king of Navarre received the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church, but afterwards declared that if permitted to recover he would openly profess and maintain the Confession of Augsburg. He was in his forty-fourth year, and left one son, hereafter to be the famous King Henry IV. Rouen was taken at the close of October, 1562 ; the battle of Dreux, the most decisive action of the campaign, was fought on the 19th December. The constable, the duke of Guise, and St. André were all present on the field ; Montmorency was taken prisoner, and his squadrons routed by Coligny ; St. André, coming to the assistance of his colleague, was killed, and the Huguenots were already in full pursuit of their flying foes, when Guise who, not choosing either to serve under the constable or dispute the command with him, had held aloof with his body of horse composed of his own friends and retainers, exclaimed "The day is ours !" and suddenly charging the dispersed Protestants, made Condé prisoner, and remained master of the field. The captivity of the constable on the one side, and of Condé on the other, the death of St André, and that of the king of Navarre, had removed out of the way of Guise all rivals. He was made Lieutenant-General of France, and saw himself almost master of the kingdom. But at the moment of his greatest triumph, he was assassinated by Poltrot de Méré, a Protestant soldier of worthless character, who had alternately played the spy for both parties. The

duke was forty-three years of age at the time of his death, and left behind him "no equal for that combination of civil and military qualities which made him the most formidable opponent of the Huguenots." In the repeated and protracted tortures which preceded and accompanied the execution of Poltrot, he accused a number of Huguenot gentlemen and ministers, Coligny in particular, as his accomplices and abettors in the murder of Guise; alternately repeating and denying these foul charges, as he hoped to procure some delay or mitigation of his doom.

The high character of the admiral was of itself a sufficient answer to such an accusation; but both he and the other chief persons named by Poltrot took pains to clear themselves from all participation in his crime. Henry of Guise, nevertheless, the eldest son of the murdered duke, incapable perhaps of comprehending the magnanimous character of Coligny, or glad to have so illustrious an object for his revenge, vowed implacable hatred to him as the destroyer of his father, and from the time he grew to manhood ceased not, openly or covertly, to seek an opportunity of taking vengeance. The high offices of the late duke were divided among his sons, though all were but boys at the time of his death. Henry became grand master of the palace, and governor of Champagne; Charles, afterwards duke of Mayenne, was made grand chamberlain; a third brother became a cardinal; and all the three figured conspicuously in the crimes and troubles of the evil days in which their lot was cast.

And now Catherine paid court to the prince of Condé, who was wearying of his captivity; flattered him with a deceitful hope of being named lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and so wrought upon him by her blandishments and intrigues, that he was induced, unknown to Coligny, to conclude a peace on very disadvantageous terms. The Huguenot ranks had just been reinforced, their treasury recruited, and Condé had promised his ally, Queen



Elizabeth, not to make peace separately ; but he disregarded all these considerations. The conditions offered by the court secured liberty of worship to the Huguenot gentry on their estates, but to the townspeople only in certain places, many of which were so far removed from one another, that a vast number of the humbler classes of Protestants appeared likely to be altogether deprived of the public ordinances of religion. Coligny and most of the leading Huguenots bitterly regretted the rashness with which the prince had accepted these terms, when they were in a condition to have demanded far greater concessions. But Condé, unhappily, was a slave to his pleasures, though a hero on the battle-field ; and he now surrendered himself without reserve to the scandalous indulgences which delighted and disgraced the French court. One service, not of a very honourable kind, Catherine required of him ; that he should help to drive the English, whose presence he had urgently solicited, out of Havre ; for Elizabeth had declared her intention of retaining that town until Calais should be restored, according to the promise made by Henry II., in a treaty concluded in April, 1559. The garrison, under Lord Warwick, made a gallant defence for more than two months, until, worn out by pestilence which raged in the town, they capitulated on honourable terms. Elizabeth, disgusted by the ingratitude of her late allies, soon afterwards negotiated a peace.

The ill-considered treaty made by Condé had “by a stroke of the pen,” said Coligny, “broken up more congregations than the enemy’s forces could have dispersed in ten years ;” but this was not the whole of the evil. Murderous outrages and assassinations took the place of open war. The constable Montmorency, though nearly fourscore years of age, had nothing of the pacific disposition to be expected from grey hairs, and was plotting a most ferocious outbreak on the Protestants, with his son Damville, governor of Languedoc, Tavannes, governor of Burgundy, and several other provincial commanders.



Catherine discovered and defeated the project ; her time was not yet come for the wholesale slaughter of the Huguenots. But the solicitations of the king of Spain, the thunders of the Vatican, the anathemas of the Council of Trent, now (December 1563) on the point of dissolution, all contributed to inflame the animosity which burnt in the breast of the Catholics.

The king had completed his 13th year in the previous summer, and had been declared of competent age to rule ; but Catherine, though no longer regent in name, was virtually the sovereign, and continued for the next quarter of a century the chief adviser of the Crown. A troop of beautiful maids of honour followed her everywhere ; and their business was to attract and cajole, and corrupt the men whom she could not bend to her purposes by flattery or by gifts.

In the year 1564 several months were spent by the king and court in a progress through the east and south of France, in which all business was laid aside, while feasts and pageants were daily celebrated amidst the half-ruined towns which bore sad traces of the effects of civil war. The royal party wintered in the south ; and in the following summer Catherine and her son proceeded to Bayonne, on pretext of a visit to the queen of Spain, who came thither to meet her mother, attended by the duke of Alva. The days were spent in spectacles of unexampled magnificence ; the nights were devoted to the concerting of plans for the destruction of the Huguenots. One expression used by Alva in his conversations with Catherine has become historical. "The head of one salmon is worth ten thousand frogs." But Catherine needed no prompting to make her resolve on the destruction of the Protestant chiefs, so soon as she could securely entangle them in her toils. On his return from Bayonne, nevertheless, Charles appeared inclined to moderate counsels, and listened to L'Hôpital, who still hoped and strove to conciliate and unite all good Frenchmen ; but Catherine found plausible excuses for a large

increase in the military force of the Crown, summoned 6,000 mercenaries to augment the Swiss guard, and for the first time instituted the French Guards. These and many other circumstances excited the suspicions of the Protestants, and in September, 1567, the troubled ill-observed peace gave way to renewed hostilities.

Open war began with a very rash attempt of the Huguenots to surprise the king when residing with a scanty guard at Meaux. The scheme failed, but Charles never forgot or forgave the humiliation of his hasty flight to Paris. A battle took place almost under the walls of the capital, with no decisive result, excepting the death of the constable, who was mortally wounded. At the end of six months' war, the court again offered a deceitful peace, which lasted no longer than the war had done, but was far more injurious to the Protestant party, since French historians estimate that more than twenty times as many Huguenots were murdered by private assassins, or mob violence, during the months of so-called peace, than had fallen in battle during the war. L'Hôpital made a last effort to change the evil policy of the government, and was dismissed from his post. The cardinal of Lorraine now took the lead ; and an edict soon appeared utterly forbidding the exercise of any religion but the Catholic, and banishing all Protestant ministers immediately from the kingdom. Driven to despair, the Huguenots once more rose up in arms everywhere, and while the larger number joined Condé and the admiral, who had been obliged to fly to La Rochelle to save their lives, bands of men whose fury could no longer be restrained by counsels of moderation, burnt churches and convents, wasted the lands belonging to them, murdered priests, and committed a thousand outrages. Much blood was shed on all sides, but the Catholic general, Louis, duke of Montpensier, outdid all his contemporaries in deeds of horror. History shrinks from relating the ingenious cruelties of which he was the inventor. The king's brother, Henry, duke of Anjou, had been made com-

mander-in-chief, though scarcely eighteen. Assisted by Tavannes, he gave Condé battle at Jarnac, on the borders of the Charente, in March, 1569, and routed his army. Condé had received some severe injuries previously, and went into action with a shattered leg, and one arm in a sling. Struck off his horse, he still defended himself valiantly, surrounded by a little knot of followers, amongst whom one old gentleman with his band of twenty-five sons, grandsons, and nephews, was most of all conspicuous. All perished, or were taken prisoners in the attempt to save their beloved chief. Wounded and helpless, Condé was forced at last to surrender, and was immediately murdered by a favourite officer of the duke of Anjou. He was only thirty-eight years old at the time of his death ; and his loss was considered an irreparable injury to the Huguenot cause. The news that Condé was dead was received with extraordinary joy at the court. The royal lineage of the deceased prince, joined to his prepossessing qualities, had drawn upon him the bitterest jealousy of the king and his brother ; and Anjou made no secret of his satisfaction with the cowardly murderer, who had come behind his bleeding gallant foe, and shot him through the head with a pistol. Condé was eminently gifted with the power of winning affection. Much as his best friends had found to disapprove in his conduct, they were ardently attached to him ; and his courtesy, affability, and chivalrous courage are eulogized in the strongest terms, even by contemporaries most hostile to the faith which he had embraced.

But a new actor was now to appear on the scene, in whom both the virtues and the faults of the murdered prince would hereafter be found, united with a far loftier genius, and displayed in a far more conspicuous character. No sooner was the disastrous event of the day of Jarnac made known to the Protestants of the south, than the heroic queen of Navarre hastened to Cognac, where the remains of the army were assembled, and presenting herself before the depressed, almost discouraged soldiers,

holding in one hand her own son, Henry prince of Béarn, in the other Henry of Condé, son of the prince for whom they were mourning, she said to them : “ I offer you my son, and I trust to your care the son of the great chief whom we have lost. Cousins in blood, they will be partners in danger and in honour. May Heaven grant them grace to be worthy of the cause they defend ! ” The young princes were but sixteen at that time ; but Henry of Béarn came forward, and said, “ I swear to defend our religion, and to maintain our cause, until, either through death or victory, we win the liberty for which we fight.” And amidst the acclamations of the troops, he was at once proclaimed protector of the Protestants, and commander of the forces, Coligny being appointed to act as general-in-chief. Here, however, we must go back some years, to retrace the early history of the prince, who was to play so important a part in the events of the time.

## CHAPTER XL.

Parentage and Early History of Henry of Navarre.—Queen Jane.—Battle of Moncontour, 1569.—Peace of St. Germain, 1570.—Dissimulation of the Court: Henry marries Margaret of France.—Massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, 1572.—Henry renounces his Faith.—The Huguenots hold La Rochelle.—Death of Charles IX., 1574.

## FROM 1533 A.D. TO 1574.

HENRY of Navarre,\* commonly known in the history of France as *Henry the Great*, was the grandson of Margaret, sister of Francis I., and Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre. The sons of Henry d'Albret died young, and his daughter Jane became the heiress of the crown of Navarre, a little kingdom which had recently been greatly reduced by encroachments on the side of Spain. In her twelfth year, by the imperious will of her uncle, Francis I., and to serve the political objects he had in view, Jane was married to the duke of Cleves, though her parents were opposed to the alliance, and the little princess herself publicly and formally declared her dissent. Laden with jewels till she could not walk without assistance, the poor child was carried like a victim to the altar. There, however, the union ended. The little bride was given back into her mother's hands for the completion of her education; and three years after the marriage, Francis became as anxious to have it annulled as he had formerly been to promote it, for the duke of Cleves had gone over from his side to that of his enemy Charles V. The reigning pope being friendly to France, a divorce was easily obtained. Jane meanwhile grew up, and became

\* The writer is indebted for many particulars respecting Henry of Navarre to the Rev. J. H. Gurney's "Life of Henry IV."

conspicuous for beauty and talent, and still more for an energy and force of character beyond her years. Many competitors appeared for her hand. The emperor at one time desired to obtain it for his son Philip II.; Francis of Guise sought the alliance eagerly, for the possession of Navarre would have favoured his aspiring policy.

But the favoured, if not the most worthy suitor, was Antony of Bourbon, descended from one of the younger sons of St. Louis, and next in succession to the crown of France, if the reigning line should become extinct. Antony was handsome, personally brave, and possessed all the external qualities of a gentleman and a soldier; though his after-life proved him a weak vain man, of licentious habits, and with a narrow intellect, which made him quite unfit to rule. It was long, however, before he was called upon to give any proof of his capacity for government, for his wife's father lived to old age.

Henry of Navarre was born in December, 1533, at a castle near Pau, where his cradle, the shell of a large tortoise, is reverently preserved as a relic. His grandfather doted on him with a fondness which was increased by the loss of two elder grandsons in their infancy. Claiming him from the moment of his birth as his own especial charge, he wrapped him in his cloak, and rubbed his lips with wine and a clove of garlic, an infallible recipe of Bearnese nurses for producing mauliness and vigour of constitution. Henry had not completed his third year when his grandfather died; but the system of training recommended by the old king was carried out by his daughter, and the little boy was educated among his native mountains, and brought up on peasant's fare, growing up amongst the bold, frank-hearted Bearnese rustics, and sharing their hardysports and labours. Robust in frame and gay of heart, the prince was an universal favourite. Queen Jane was both learned, and a patroness of learning. Henry did not inherit the literary tastes of his mother and grandmother, but he possessed a ready wit, which no books could have given him, and the art of



captivating men of every degree, by cordial pithy sayings, which have passed into household words.

As for his religious education, he was alternately under the guidance of Protestant and Romanist teachers. The support afforded by Margaret of Navarre to the first French Reformers has been mentioned in a former chapter. Without leaving the communion of the Church of Rome, she had discarded what appeared to her to be corruptions of its doctrine. "Her daughter grew up with a faith like her own; refused to be led by the bigots of either party, honoured piety wherever she found it, and made even-handed justice to her subjects of both creeds the rule of her government. For a long time she professed herself a dutiful daughter of the Church, in the hope that abuses might be corrected, and differences healed without a revolt against the ecclesiastical rulers of Christendom." But the course of events in her own kingdom and in France, as well as her clearer perceptions of truth and error, and her closer observation of the more conspicuous men of both parties, gradually silenced all her scruples concerning separation, and made her, at last, a leader among those who most actively sought to withstand popish teaching and popish policy. By her zeal and energy, the Basque tongue, a language before unwritten, and scarcely understood beyond the limits of the Biscayan provinces, became the means of conveying sacred truth to her subjects; and the version of the New Testament printed under her orders at La Rochelle is a monument of her wise care for her people. But while Queen Jane was becoming more firmly fixed in the principles she had embraced, her husband, who at first proclaimed himself a Protestant with a zeal more noisy than discreet, was lending an ear to the tempters, who represented that his religion alone barred him from access to the high offices and honours appropriate to his royal descent. He seceded to popery, and insisted on consigning his son, who was now eight years old, to Romish tutors. Jane could not resist, though she bitterly

regretted her husband's change of purpose. But on his death, less than twelve months afterwards, Prince Henry returned under the guardianship of his mother. In the following year, the pope (Pius IV.) took upon him to summon the queen of Navarre to Rome, there to answer for herself on the charge of heresy, on pain of being excommunicated, her children bastardized, and her dominions forfeited to any one whom the pope should permit to appropriate them. This assumption of sovereignty on the part of the pontiff gave, however, great offence to the French court, inasmuch as it was a new thing that any pope should pretend to confiscate property within the French dominions, or summon to Rome a princess who held many of her fiefs as a vassal of the Crown. Pius accordingly desisted; but not before a nefarious plot had been concerted by some Bearnese traitors, with the privity of the king of Spain and his minister Alva, for carrying off both Jane and her son, and consigning them to the custody of the Inquisition. On the detection of this plot, it appeared that a more effectual protection than could be afforded him in Béarn was necessary for the security of the prince; and Henry, having been committed to the care of governors who were known to be attached to the Reformed principles, was removed to the court of France, there to complete his education. His class-fellows and chosen comrades at this time were the very persons to whom he was afterwards opposed, as the fiercest, most unsparing enemies of himself and the Huguenot party,—Henry, duke of Anjou, and Henry of Guise. Catherine of Medicis distinguished him with extraordinary favour, and would have him by her side, whether she attended mass or a party of pleasure, or even the king's council-chamber.

But when the prince was about thirteen, his mother, fearing, with only too much reason, the corrupting influences of the court, removed him from Paris; and, during the next three years, his preparation for active life was carried on alternately amongst his own people and at the

chief towns of the south-west, La Rochelle and Bordeaux. It might be wished, for the moral health of Henry, that he had never been suffered to inhale in his boyhood an atmosphere so polluted as that which pervaded the court of France ; for contemporary writers, while commending in the highest terms the engaging manners, the liveliness, courtesy, and premature intelligence of their young prince, remark also the excessive keenness of his taste for the amusements of the town, and especially that love for high play which was one of the great evils of his maturer years.

Before Queen Jane would give her voice for war, and devote her only son, the hope and pride of her heart and kingdom, to the terrible contest, she did everything in her power to preserve peace, earnestly exhorting and beseeching Charles and his mother not to sacrifice the quiet and prosperity of France to the selfish, ambitious intrigues of the cardinal of Lorraine. "This man," she said to Catherine, "wishes to annihilate the Protestants. We serve God when we try to prevent such a deed of guilt ; we serve the king when we induce him to respect his own edicts. To gain these two objects we have taken up arms, in the hope of serving France, the mother and nurse of so many noble citizens, threatened as she is with utter ruin by her pretended champions. It belongs to princes of the blood to rally round the throne and support it, not to foreigners, who close the king's ears against the cry of distress and pleadings of truth, and lead him to the very edge of a fatal precipice." But there was no relenting in the court ; though, fearing that some breathings of clemency, some whispers of gratitude for past services, or of shame for the breach of promises and professions, sealed by oaths and engagements, repeated again and again, might impede the rulers of France in their career of slaughter, letters breathing nothing but blood, fire, and extermination, were diligently despatched by Pope Pius V. The correspondence of the pope, indeed, with the queen-mother, the king, the duke of Anjou, and the cardinal of Lorraine,

at this time, seems to be inspired by the very spirit of cruelty and murder; provocations to unsparing bloodshed being mixed up, as usual, with appeals to Scripture and expressions of piety, which render them only the more revolting.

When all freedom of conscience and worship was finally interdicted on pain of death by the king of France, and even her own hereditary dominions menaced with invasion by the enemies of her faith, the queen of Navarre reluctantly but resolutely pronounced for war, as the last resource of men hunted for their lives.

The loss at Jarnac had been great, because of the death of Condé, who was in himself a host; otherwise few lives, comparatively speaking, had been sacrificed on either side, and a fresh army of 12,000 men assembled under the standard of Coligny before the summer was over. They were joined by 13,000 Germans, who had accomplished three months' march across nearly a thousand miles of hostile territory, in which they were harassed by perpetual skirmishes. In the beginning of October, 1569, the armies of Anjou and Coligny encountered each other at Moncontour, in Poitou. Before the action began, Henry of Navarre, with the gallant bearing which so often afterwards availed him in the hour of peril and difficulty, rode along the lines, courteously saluting the German leaders, and addressing the French nobles familiarly by name. But Coligny would not suffer the life of the youth to be hazarded on the field, and entrusted both Henry and his young cousin Condé to the charge of Count Louis of Nassau, who occupied a neighbouring height with a few troops in reserve. The prince of Navarre watched the alternations of the battle with intense anxiety, and at a moment in which Anjou's force showed symptoms of unsteadiness, it was with difficulty he was restrained from charging in person. When checked in his purpose, he exclaimed with bitter disappointment, "Then we throw away our advantage, and the battle in consequence!" and the result proved

how correct had been the instinct of this soldier of sixteen. The carnage that day was frightful, and the success of the royal troops complete; but five or six hundred men remaining together to rally round the standard of Coligny, who was himself very severely wounded. Count Louis, however, contrived to cover the retreat of the scattered Huguenots so skilfully, that the royal generals forbore to pursue; nor did Anjou vigorously follow up his advantage, wasting two months and 6,000 men in the siege of the Huguenot fortress of St. Jean d'Angely; while Coligny re-collected the remains of his force, placed La Rochelle in security, and wintered, accompanied by the young princes, in Languedoc, where he had taken possession of Nismes, the most important city at that time in the province. On the return of spring, the admiral resumed the field, and though arrested by a dangerous illness, he had gained or recovered fifty principal towns, and was steadily advancing towards Paris, when the court began to make overtures of peace. The terms offered were more advantageous than the fortune of war had entitled the Huguenots to expect; viz., permission to live in all parts of the kingdom, unmolested on account of their religion; to meet for public worship in the suburbs of certain towns, but not in Paris, or within ten leagues of it, or near any place where the court might happen to be. The Protestant lords and landowners were also allowed to have divine worship in their own houses, under certain restrictions. The public schools and hospitals were to be open to all, without distinction of religion; and Huguenots were declared capable of holding all public offices. Above all, the four towns, La Rochelle, La Charité, Montauban, and Cognac, were to remain in the custody of the princes of Navarre and Condé for two years. The occupation of La Rochelle secured to them free intercourse with their English allies; La Charité commanded the navigation of the Loire; Montauban opened to them a communication with Languedoc; and Cognac was in the heart of



Angoumois, a province in which their friends greatly predominated.

On the whole, the conditions of peace were so favourable that many of the Huguenots could not help doubting the sincerity of the court which proposed them, and which had hitherto taken advantage of every interval of peace (so called) to outrage and destroy its Protestant subjects more stealthily but not less fatally than in open war.

But Coligny would not entertain any such suspicions. Shocked and grieved in his inmost soul at the miseries which civil war brought upon his country, and disgusted by the corrupt license and the sanguinary habits which it engendered, even in the ranks of his own army, and which no strictness of discipline could wholly restrain, he hailed the prospect of peace with the warmest satisfaction. A treaty, called the Peace of St. Germain from the place at which it was signed, was finally concluded, August 15th, 1570. And now the spirit as well as the policy of the government seemed to be wholly changed. Charles and his mother were lavish in their expressions of good-will; the admiral, especially, was treated with the highest consideration and favour, and encouraged to unfold freely his views of the true interests of France. An object which he had prominently in mind was to assist the Netherlands in their war of independence.

Ever since Henry II. had inadvertently betrayed to the prince of Orange the purpose of the Spanish government to exterminate its Protestant subjects in the Netherlands, the prince had resolved to do his utmost for the expulsion of the Spanish army from the country to which he was bound by the most sacred ties. Compared with the mighty resources which the king of Spain had at his disposal, those of the Netherlands and their champion seemed insignificant indeed; yet they had bravely entered on the struggle. And now Coligny and other distinguished French Protestants entertained sanguine hopes that their king would permit them to



turn their arms against the oppressor of their fellow-religionists in the Low Countries; and would himself enter on a contest, which, if successful, might add greatly to the strength and influence of his kingdom, and proportionably weaken Spain, whose possessions on the eastern frontier of France had so often proved a point from whence to invade the French territory.

Charles was, or feigned to be, much interested in these projects. He received Louis of Nassau, the brother of the prince of Orange, with every appearance of friendship. Affecting a feeling of even filial regard for the admiral, he called him *Father*, and held conferences with him concerning the most effectual means of interfering on behalf of the Netherlands. He sent an ambassador to the Elector Palatine to propose an alliance with the German princes of the Reformation. He opened negotiations for a marriage between his presumptive heir, the duke of Anjou, and Queen Elizabeth of England. And as a crowning proof of his desire for union, and good-will towards his Protestant subjects, he proposed to marry his own sister Margaret to their leader, the prince of Navarre, and pressed this proposal in the most urgent and seemingly affectionate manner on the queen of Navarre. Jane hesitated long; unwilling to repel any offer which really tended to promote peace and unity, but painfully apprehensive that the welfare and happiness of her son might be sacrificed by union with a princess whose religious faith was different from his own, and who had been brought up at a court so tainted with vice as that of France.

On the other hand, her most trusted counsellors supported the king's offer; Huguenots and Catholics alike dwelling on the blessings of a confirmed peace and reconciliation between all Frenchmen, of which this marriage would be a pledge and security: while Charles, pressing her in the warmest manner to visit the court, and bring the prince with her, declared that "this marriage would work wonders, for in very truth he gave his sister not only to the prince, but to the whole Hugue-

not body." Meanwhile the pope was writing urgent letters to the king and his mother against the match, and remonstrating against this new policy of showing favour to the heretics ; and to give greater weight to his interference, he despatched Cardinal Alessandrino as his legate to the French court, charged to deprecate in the strongest terms the marriage of the princess. "My Lord Cardinal," said Charles, after the matter had been long discussed between them, "all you have said is true, and I admit it to be so. And I am grateful both to the pope and to you. If I had any other means of avenging myself on my enemies, I would not conclude this marriage ; but I have not any other means." Yet a few months, and the interpretation of these words became horribly plain, written in characters of blood ; and the legate thanked God that the king of France had kept his promise. But Pius V. did not live to see the signal accomplishment of the murderous counsels he had urged so often and so strenuously : he died in the spring of 1572, and was succeeded by Gregory XIII.

To the queen of Navarre, Charles affected great scorn of the legate and his mission. Her reluctant consent to the marriage had been at last obtained, and she had come to meet the court at Blois, to conclude the necessary arrangements respecting it. But almost everything that she there saw and heard confirmed her previous forebodings of evil. With her future daughter-in-law she was not allowed to converse privately, and little could be gathered concerning the sentiments and character of the princess in the brief and formal interviews to which she was admitted ; for Margaret said evidently only what she was told to say, and appeared to be guarded almost like a prisoner. The Princess Margaret was, in fact, the victim of her mother's policy ; for she preferred another, and was being forced into the union with Henry of Navarre against her will. Though apparently sensible and well-bred, Jane feared, and with only too good reason, that she had not escaped the infection which tainted all

around her ; for in general and excessive corruption of morals, the court exceeded even the worst estimate which the queen of Navarre had formed of it previously. Meanwhile, the habitual dissimulation of the queen-mother was, for once, almost overborne by her exultation at the successful progress of her schemes. Amidst caresses and professions of attachment, on the part of the king and his brother, which Queen Jane felt to be mere mockery, she encountered perpetual irony, sarcasms, and even insults from Catherine, who affected indeed to veil them beneath an appearance of excessive gaiety and sportiveness. Mischief seemed to threaten her son, her subjects, and her fellow-religionists, whether she entered into the proposed alliance, or not. She could only hope that the marriage might involve less evil and avert greater.

Towards the end of May, Henry joined his mother, and accompanied her to Paris, attended by a brilliant train of Huguenot nobles and gentlemen, amongst whom was a boy of eleven years old, Maximilian de Bethune, hereafter to be famous as his prime minister and friend, under the title of the duke de Sully. Maximilian, who was going to Paris to attend one of the public schools, was brought by his father to meet Prince Henry on this journey, and enter into his service. But the elder Bethune, like many other Huguenots, high and low, entertained apprehensions of evil designs on the part of the French court, which they could neither account for nor overcome. All such forebodings were deepened by the untimely death of the queen of Navarre, within three weeks after her arrival at Paris. Jane of Navarre was but forty-three years of age, and her death was an irreparable loss to her own kingdom, and to the Huguenot cause. It was strongly suspected that she had been poisoned by a creature of Catherine de Medicis. But no proof of this was found ; and the suspicion rested more upon the known character of Catherine, and the fact that the death of Queen Jane happened opportunely for

the success of the project meditated by the court, than upon any symptoms attendant on the mortal sickness of the deceased princess.

Her death caused the marriage to be delayed for two months, but preparations were made for its celebration in August, with due splendour. When the time drew near, Charles solicited, in flattering terms, the attendance of all the Protestant lords and chiefs, who had dispersed to their own homes after the death of the queen, and to Coligny, in particular, he wrote in the most pressing manner. It was sorrowfully remembered afterwards, how many attempts were made to deter him from going, and made in vain; and how he had replied at last with indignation to the friends who argued that no dependence ought to be placed on the professions of Charles, since he had been under the influence of a perfidious mother from his tenderest childhood; saying that he would not distrust the word of his sovereign, or do anything which could tend to a renewal of the miserable dissensions and wars by which the country had been so long harassed. And he added, emphatically, "I had rather be dragged by a hook through the streets of Paris, than take the least step which might help to bring back those evil days."

Loving his country like a true patriot, but assured that freedom of conscience was the birthright of every citizen, he clung fondly to the hope that this great prize might be won by patience and firmness without further appeal to the sword. The duke of Anjou, he admitted, was not well inclined to the Huguenots, but he would hardly persist in hostility when the interests of the opposing parties had become cemented by his sister's marriage. As for his own personal safety, which was, after all, a small thing compared with the quiet of France, Coligny declared he was under no concern about it; since the king had required that himself, and the young duke of Guise, the only enemy from whom he could apprehend outrage, should mutually engage to bury all former wrongs and enmities in oblivion.

Similar attempts had been made to inspire the young king of Navarre with suspicions of the sincerity of Charles, and with the like ill success. Such, indeed, was the dependence placed on Coligny's sagacity, that where he saw safety, the Huguenots generally were ashamed or unwilling to imagine danger; and of all their principal men, veteran warriors, or lords of wide domains, now assembled in Paris, "brought to the net" (as Charles said to his mother), we read of but one who escaped, like a bird from the snare of the fowler, telling the admiral that he "liked not so much caressing on the part of the court, and had rather save his life among fools, than stay to perish with wise men."

Amongst the leaders of the party opposed to them, Henry, duke of Guise, was by far the most conspicuous member. Sagacious, daring, accomplished in all martial exercises, gifted with a noble presence and a ready persuasive tongue, he was already the most powerful of the little knot of counsellors with whom the queen-mother concerted her secret plans, and the most popular chief in France with the multitude. Although only twenty-one years of age, he was the recognized head of the party which had followed his father, and which was swayed by the counsels of his uncle, the cardinal of Lorraine, under whose guidance the duke had learned to look on the extirpation of heresy as the great business and duty of life. His hatred of the Huguenots was the more intense, because, misled by slanderous tongues, he looked on his father's assassination as having been prompted by Coligny; and the reconciliation with the admiral, to which, at the king's command, he had consented, was, on his side, nothing but a hollow form, serving, however, to facilitate the deep revenge which was to follow.

The marriage of the king of Navarre took place on the 18th August, with every outward mark of festivity and splendour. Cautious observers, however, noticed that the population of the capital was in an unquiet state, ready, on the least provocation, to break into disturbance;



and for months past the pulpits had been resounding with invectives against these very Huguenots who were now brought into their midst. Under pretext of preserving the public peace, the king's guards had already been reinforced by 4,000 picked men. Another considerable force was on its march towards Paris; and to prevent any suspicion which might arise from their entrance into the capital, Charles artfully stated to Coligny that he was by no means satisfied that the duke of Guise was sincere in his late promise of reconciliation, and that he should be deeply grieved if any mischief were to result to the admiral or his friends, from the powerful retinue of armed men whom the Guises had brought with them, under pretence of swelling the pomp of the nuptials. Coligny highly approved the king's precaution; and leading his brethren into the same snare which had entrapped himself, spoke of the introduction of their future assassins as an additional proof of the friendly vigilance of the government.

Meanwhile, the queen-mother and her chief confidants, especially her favourite son, Anjou, began to have some misgivings concerning Charles himself. The frank affectionate respect with which he was treated by Coligny, and the martial warmth and enterprise which animated the discourse of the old soldier when Charles conversed with him concerning the proposed campaign in the Netherlands, seemed to gratify the king so much, that they could hardly tell whether his friendly demeanour was still but a mask. Catherine, who was jealous to the last degree of the power she had obtained, foresaw that if once the king came under the influence of Coligny, he would no longer be her willing tool. She suspected that this honest counsellor had already made him sensible that he could not be truly a king unless he had the power of doing good or ill to his subjects, and that this power, and indeed the whole management of the state, had slipped out of his hands into hers. And since Charles, though weak and fickle, was so impetuous and violent



when thwarted that it was dangerous to oppose him, Catherine and Anjou resolved to avert the danger in time, and at once remove out of the way the man whose growing influence might ruin their plot at the very time when all was ripe for its execution. An assassin was therefore sought, and easily found; a man of good birth, but infamous character; a notorious murderer already, but one who went unpunished in those terrible days, and even came to be distinguished as "the King's Bravo." This man was posted in a house belonging to Guise, where he was to lie in wait for a favourable opportunity of slaying Coligny. And it was the hope of Catherine and her counsellors that the Huguenots, in their grief and alarm at the murder, would break out into acts of violence, which would afford an admirable excuse for their destruction by the large force assembled within the city. When fighting once began, it need not cease till the enemy was entirely crushed. The uncertain aim of the assassin defeated this promising plan; and the indiscriminate slaughter already pre-determined was carried into effect without even the shadow of a pretext to justify it.

A few mornings after the marriage, Coligny, who had just left the king, to return to his own lodgings, was passing before the house where the assassin lay concealed, when he received two bullets, one shattering the forefinger of his right hand, the other burying itself in his left arm. When this attempt at murder was made known to the king, he exclaimed, angrily, "Shall I never have any rest? Are there always to be new troubles?" Some hours afterwards he visited the wounded man, accompanied by his mother and Anjou, testified great sorrow, and protested with curses not fit to be transcribed (but which formed the usual accompaniment of his discourse) that if he could discover the assassin, he would inflict such punishment on him as could never be forgotten. "Your safety," he added, "is my concern; for are you not my guest? Get your brave friends about

you, and I will plant my own guards at your door, that I may be sure you are well guarded." There were, in fact, some indications of a popular tumult the next day, and the king took advantage of this, largely to increase the number of soldiers posted at the gates of Coligny's lodging, and placed the whole company under command of an officer who was notorious for his hatred of the Huguenots, and of the admiral in particular.

This was on the 23rd of August ; and on the same day the municipal authorities were ordered to have two thousand armed citizens in readiness at nightfall, to await the king's orders ; a white scarf, or the shirt-sleeve exposed on the left arm, and a white cross on the hat, were to be the distinguishing marks of this body of murderers. To facilitate the work, all the householders in the principal streets were directed to place lights in their windows. Lists had already been prepared of all the Huguenots in the city, and of the houses at which they were lodged. These preparations had been made very secretly, yet not without exciting some observation ; and the hearts of many peaceable Catholics, who knew nothing of the dark plot which had been formed, were filled with anxiety and alarm.

All was now ready ; and at two hours after midnight, on the 24th, which was both Sunday and St. Bartholomew's day, the great bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois was to toll the signal for the massacre of every Huguenot in the city, of whatever age, sex, or condition. At the last moment, Charles, whether actuated by fear, remorse, or merely his habitual inconstancy of purpose, hesitated to give the fatal order. But his mother, Anjou, Tavannes, and four others, repaired in a body to his apartment, and almost forced from him the word of command. " But kill them all ! " he exclaimed, entering into a sudden fury, " kill them all ! I will not have one left to reproach me." Immediately afterwards, St. Germain's bell was heard sounding its alarum, and in a few moments the streets of the city were full of armed men. The duke of Guise at

once repaired to the dwelling of Coligny, that he might witness the revenge for which he had thirsted so long. Even when roused by the din of bells, the tumultuous cries, and sound of fire-arms in the streets without, the admiral was slow to believe that any deliberate mischief was intended; but becoming aware of the true state of the case, he spent a few moments in prayer with his friends, and then conjured them to leave him, and provide for their own safety. "Let not your wives reproach me with their widowhood," he said. "You may escape, it is impossible for me to do so; and happily I am prepared for death, and have long anticipated it." Supporting himself against the wall of his chamber (for the suffering and loss of blood occasioned by his wounds had rendered him too weak to stand alone), he calmly awaited the entrance of the assassins. Besme, a servant of Guise, was at their head. "Art thou Coligny?" he said. "I am," returned the admiral. "Young man, you ought to respect my grey hairs." The murderers immediately fell upon him, and despatched him with repeated blows. He had scarcely ceased to breathe, when Guise impatiently demanded, "Is all over?" "All is over," answered Besme. "Then throw him out of the window." The bleeding body was accordingly thrown down into the court-yard, where the duke, having first wiped the gore from the face to make sure that it was indeed his victim, spurned the corpse with his foot, and then abandoned it to the outrages of the populace.

Already death was in every street: the Huguenots, awakened by the tumult, rushed to their doors to inquire the cause, and were instantly cut down; while the duke of Anjou, the Marshal Tavannes, Guise, Montpensier, and other men of high degree, went through the city, directing and encouraging the murderers. The populace joined with ferocious pleasure in the work, adding every imaginable outrage. One tradesman boasted that with his own hand he had killed four hundred persons: a courtier, with even more revolting cruelty, *bought*

thirty Huguenots from the mob, to kill them "*in his own way.*" His way being, first, to make them renounce their faith by a promise of sparing their lives, and then to put them deliberately to death, measuring his blows so that they should perish in lingering, agonizing torture.

Margaret, Henry's bride, gives a lively description of the scenes at the palace on that terrible night and morning. "I knew nothing," she says, "of what was going on. The Huguenots suspected me because I was a Catholic, and the Catholics because of my Huguenot husband." And thus, though associating familiarly with the contrivers of the plot, she was completely in the dark up to the very eve of the St. Bartholomew. When she bade the queen good night, and prepared to retire to her own apartments, her sister burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Pray do not go there." "The queen my mother," proceeds the narrative, "saw this, and calling my sister to her, was very angry, charging her to say nothing to me. My sister said it could never be right to sacrifice me in that manner, for the enemy would doubtless avenge themselves on me, if they discovered what was going on. My mother answered that God could take care of me if He pleased, but that any how I must go, or suspicion might be excited. I saw that there was some dispute, but did not hear what was said. My mother then spoke roughly to me, and told me to go to bed; my sister wept as she bade me *good night*, but did not dare to breathe a syllable to me of what she knew; and I went away, trembling with fright, yet utterly unable to guess what I had to fear." She found her chamber occupied by thirty or forty of her husband's Huguenot friends, and their talk through the night was of the attempted assassination of Coligny, and of the revenge to be taken on the Guises (the supposed contrivers of it) either by the king in due course of law, or, if justice were denied them, by their own hands. The night passed in this way without her ever closing her eyes; and at daybreak her husband got up, saying he would play at tennis till Charles should be awake.

His gentlemen went away with him, and Margaret, her fears dispelled by the daylight, told her nurse to close the doors, and composed herself to sleep. An hour afterwards there was a cry at her door of "Navarre ! Navarre !" and when it was opened, a wounded man rushed in, followed by four archers of the guard. The fugitive clung to the princess for protection, covering her dress with his blood ; and the captain of the guard, soon following, first scolded his men for their "indiscretion," and then granted the life of the wounded man to Margaret's prayers. He told her also what was doing in the palace and elsewhere, assuring her at the same time that her husband was safe with the king. The mystery of the previous evening was solved now, and Margaret hastened to her sister's apartments ; but in her way she encountered another flying Huguenot, who fell mortally wounded, almost at her feet.

The gentlemen who waited on the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé had been singled out from the crowd of common victims. After the attempt to murder Coligny, these two princes had been treacherously advised to gather their friends about them, for more security. They were lodged in the Louvre, like victims reserved for sacrifice ; and when the hour came, were summoned one by one, like criminals going to execution, hurried down to the court below, and there instantly slaughtered by an armed troop appointed for that service. Guise urged that their masters should be cut off too, but his advice was overruled a few hours before the massacre began, and it was resolved to spare Henry and Condé. While their friends were being murdered, they were conducted to the presence of the king, who received them with a visage of fury, and poured forth the oaths and blasphemies which were a part of his familiar speech. All disguise was thrown off now. Charles boldly avowed his share in the guilt. Coligny, he told them, was put to death by his order, as the ringleader in sedition, and the chief troubler of his kingdom ; and the same measure



was being dealt out to all the impious wretches who were infected with his errors. It would be a mere act of justice to take *their* lives also, since they had put themselves at the head of rebels. But in consideration of their youth, and out of respect to the ties of kindred, he was willing to forget the past, on one condition; namely, that they renounced their profane doctrine, and became faithful sons of the Church. "Death or the mass!" he repeated, with a terrible voice. "I will give you three days to consider of it." Henry quickly abjured his faith; Condé made a longer and more manly resistance. But he, too, was overcome at length. Henceforward they were treated with a show of friendship, but not suffered to leave the court.

The massacre lasted three days in Paris, where five (many writers say *ten*) thousand persons were put to death.\* Royal letters were sent to all the provincial governors, commanding them to destroy the Huguenots in their respective governments. Some, to their honour, refused; others obeyed. Toulouse, Lyons, Orléans, Bourges, Angers, Meaux, Rouen, became each in its turn the scene of indescribable horrors; and many other towns, large and small, contributed their quota of victims to swell the blood-stained list. "Two months elapsed before the persecutors, wearied with carnage, dropped their blunted swords;" but death had been by no means the worst extremity endured by those who perished.

Meanwhile, at Paris, and by means of his ambassadors at foreign courts, Charles was loudly proclaiming that the massacre had been necessitated by the discovery of a great conspiracy on the part of Coligny and his friends to destroy himself and the whole royal family, not omitting even the king of Navarre, though he was a Huguenot,

\* Perefex, archbishop of Paris, author of the *Life of Henry IV.*, says 10,000 in Paris, and 90,000 in the provincial cities; and several other writers make a similar statement. But others again reduce this number considerably; *Sully* says 70,000; *De Thou*, 30,000: *Sully* had, probably, the best means of knowing the facts.



in order that the supreme power might fall into the hands of the admiral himself. The time-serving Parliament of Paris acquiesced in this representation ; a mock trial was instituted against the deceased admiral and his adherents in the pretended conspiracy, and the sentence of perpetual degradation, confiscation of property, &c., was passed against their children and descendants. The body of Coligny had been thrown to the populace, by whom it had been hacked and dismembered till little semblance of humanity remained. The shapeless mass was now, however, trailed through the city to the gibbet of Montfaucon, where it was suspended over a slow fire. Charles came to gaze ; and one of his attendants turning aside from the offensive spectacle, the king (like Vitellius of old) remarked, "the body of a dead enemy always smells sweet." Two gentlemen who had escaped the slaughter were taken alive, and having been first put to the torture to make them confess the fictitious treason with which they were charged, but in vain, they were likewise hanged, in presence of the king, his mother, and the unhappy young King Henry, who had been forced to attend. It was evening when Charles arrived at the place of execution, and he ordered flambeaux to be held close to the faces of the prisoners when the hangman had done his office, that he might watch the variety of expression which each exhibited in his parting agony. With such a sovereign and example at their head, it was only natural that the populace should make a pastime of the most ferocious outrages, both upon the living and the dead ; while courtiers and ladies of high rank jested with horrible sportiveness over the spectacles they had witnessed, and made epigrams concerning "*the Bartholomew breakfast*."

In Spain, and at Rome, the tidings of the massacre had been received with the utmost delight. The pope and his cardinals proceeded immediately to St. Peter's to offer thanks before the altar for the great mercy which had been vouchsafed to Christendom ; salvoes of artillery

thundered at nightfall from the ramparts of St. Angelo ; the streets were illuminated ; and a medal was struck, to commemorate the glorious event. The cardinal of Lorraine, in the ecstasy of his heart, presented the messenger who brought the news with a thousand pieces of gold, and declared that he believed "the king's heart must have been filled with a sudden inspiration from God"! In other countries, and in England especially, the public indignation was both loud and deep. The English ambassador at Paris, Sir Francis Walsingham, after hearing all that Queen Catherine and the king had to say, boldly contradicted some of their charges against the Reformed, from his own knowledge ; and utterly loathing the perfidy and cruelty which governed their policy, informed his mistress that he thought "it less peril to live with them as enemies than as friends." The reply of Sir Thomas Smith, the English Secretary of State, has been often quoted for its rude but honest eloquence : "What warrant can the French make, now seals and words of princes being traps to catch innocents and bring them to butchery? If the admiral and all those murdered on that bloody Bartholomew day were guilty, why were they not apprehended, imprisoned, interrogated, and judged? But so much as they were made of within two hours of the assassination! Is that the manner to handle men either culpable or suspected? So is the journeyer slain by the robber,—so is the hen of the fox,—so is the hind of the lion,—so Abel of Cain,—so the innocent of the wicked,—so Abner of Joab! But grant they were guilty, they dreamed treason that night in their sleep; what did the innocent men, women, and children do at Lyons? What did the sucking children and their mothers at Rouen deserve? at Caen? at Rochelle? What is done yet we have not heard; but I think shortly we shall hear. Will God, think you, still sleep? Will not their blood ask vengeance? Shall not the earth be accursed that hath sucked up the innocent blood poured out like water upon it?"

The king and his mother had expected to rule in undisturbed quiet after the massacre ; it was far otherwise. Notwithstanding all their precautions, several Huguenots of mark and nobility had escaped the slaughter. Some had been kept at a distance from Paris by necessary business, or by distrust of the court. A few were delivered, by repeated hair's-breadth escapes, out of the very hands of the murderers ; and of this number were the youthful Maximilian de Bethune and the lord Duplessis-Mornay, two persons who were to render invaluable services to Henry IV. in years to come. And a considerable number of gentlemen who had lodged themselves on the south side of the river, being unable to procure accommodation nearer the palace, were saved by the tardiness of the officers charged with their destruction. A thousand men had been allotted for the attack on this remoter body, but the detachment did not move till long after the appointed hour, and, in the mean time, a person unknown crossed the river, and warned them of their danger. They fled at once. The duke of Guise was presently on their track, but they had gained sufficient time to elude his pursuit. Many escaped abroad for a time ; England, the Palatinate, and the Protestant Swiss cantons offered them asylums. But when the first shock of horror and distress had subsided, the surviving Protestants began to concert measures for self-defence, with a courage proportioned to their danger and their wrongs. They fled to strongholds in the Cevennes ; they shut themselves up in Nismes, Montauban, Sancerre, and endured every extremity of famine rather than surrender. Above all, they had intrenched themselves in La Rochelle, which was one of the strongest places in the kingdom. At the head of a noble bay protected from every wind, and so capacious that all the navies of Europe might ride in it, its own smaller harbour had draught enough to admit ships of the heaviest burden. Two forts and a chain protected its entrance ; a wall of extraordinary massiveness surrounded with a deep fosse enclosed the

whole city; and the numerous tide-creeks prevented attack by mining. The strength of these defences, and the confident hope that in case of need succour from abroad would reach them by sea, but, above all, the firm belief that theirs was the just cause, and had God for its defender, inspired the garrison with extraordinary resolution; and the event justified their expectation. Anjou invested their city at the head of a mighty host, which included in its ranks the most distinguished princes and warriors of France. But after six months' operations, during which he had lost (at the lowest computation) 20,000 men, besides an enormous expenditure of money and stores, he was glad to raise the siege, on terms which secured liberty of public worship to the Reformed in Nismes and Montauban, as well as at La Rochelle, and freed their brethren generally from the oppressive prosecutions instituted against the survivors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. (July, 1573.)

News of his election to the crown of Poland consoled Anjou for his ill success. Catherine had spared neither money, nor labour, nor intrigues to secure that vacant throne for her favourite son. Now that she had obtained the coveted prize, she would gladly have undone her work, for Charles was beginning to decline so evidently, that she foresaw Anjou would soon be in a position to assume the supreme power in France. Ever since the massacre, Charles had been subject to fits of gloom and fury which made him a spectacle and a terror to those who were about him. He sought relief in the most violent bodily exercise; pursuing the chase with even frenzied eagerness, till his strength was worn out, and disease of body, aggravated by remorse which haunted his pillow and conjured up frightful sounds and scenes of blood, brought him to the grave (May 30th, 1574), in his twenty-fourth year. The night before his death, when no one was near his bedside but his nurse, a Huguenot woman, who nevertheless seems to have been almost the

only creature for whom Charles entertained any affection, he called her to him, and in a voice choked with tears and sobs, said, "O nurse! nurse! What blood! What murders! What wicked counsels I have followed—God forgive me!"

## CHAPTER XLI.

Character and Government of Henry III.—Wars of Religion from 1574 to 1589.—The League.—*The Sixteen*.—*The Day of the Barricades*.—Murder of the Guises, and of Henry III., 1589.

FROM 1574 A.D. TO 1589.

CHARLES IX. had but one child, a daughter; and the crown passed to his next brother, Henry of Anjou, the reigning king of Poland. Henry, who had no sooner arrived in his Polish kingdom than he became weary of it, because it afforded him few or none of the effeminate luxuries and refinements of his mother's court, was so eager to return to France, that he fled from his capital at night, like a deserter, lest his subjects should interpose any difficulties or delay. But allured by the feasts and diversions provided to do him honour in the states through which he journeyed, he wasted four months on his road ("sowing gold and diamonds," says the historian of his reign); and to his last host, the duke of Savoy, he presented Pignerol and two other places, being all that remained to France of the Italian conquests of Francis I. This concession was by no means calculated to make the new king popular with Frenchmen. But all thought of it was soon lost in more serious causes of dissatisfaction.

Arrived at length in his kingdom, Henry III. made his first public appearance in a procession of Flagellants at Avignon, attended by the queen-mother and the cardinal of Lorraine,\* all three covered with sackcloth like peni-

\* The cardinal's share in this ceremony cost him his life. A violent chill threw him into a raging fever. He died in delirium; and the queen-mother, his associate and ally in many evil deeds, said that France was well rid of him. But being as superstitious



tents ; a species of devotion which had a singular attraction for the king. Men looked on in wonder at the change which had passed upon him. Evil and cruel he had been before, but the continual and scandalous profligacy of his life henceforward surpassed that of his worst predecessors. He was but twenty-two at his accession, yet the martial ardour he had shown at eighteen had already evaporated. He possessed much oratorical power, and in early years had given proof of intellectual ability ; but it seemed that his very understanding had become vitiated ; "he was eloquent only in lying, clever only in deceiving." When not occupied in worse pastimes, his hours were devoted to the adornment of his person, or the society of his parrots, monkeys, and pet dogs, of which he had an extraordinary number, and was continually begging and buying more. But his chosen companions, courtiers, and confidants were a band of dissolute youths, called the king's "*Mignons*," on whom he lavished the most costly and extravagant favours, and for whose amusement he degraded himself by the most despicable buffooneries. His devotions (*so-called*) scandalized his subjects almost as much as his debaucheries, for they were an outrageous compound of penance and profaneness. One day he would parade the streets of Paris amongst a company of monks and flagellants, girt with sackcloth, bareheaded, barefooted, with bleeding shoulders, brandishing the scourge ; another day he would be taking his part in a religious procession, attended by his favourite fool, Sibillot, whose grotesque antics and irreverent songs parodied the chants and ceremonial of the solemnity.

This was not the sovereign who could restore order and union to a kingdom agitated and divided as was that of France. The civil war had already broken out again, for the government, with its usual faithlessness, had ill observed the treaty of La Rochelle. And now the

as she was irreligious, she was wont, long afterwards, to complain that he came like an evil spirit to harass and torment her in her dreams.

Huguenots were joined by a new party entitled the *Politicians* (Les Politiques), headed by the sons of the deceased constable Montmorency, and other men of note who followed the policy indicated by L'Hôpital; \* and aiming chiefly at the re-establishment of order and quiet, were content to let their fellow-subjects worship God in the way they thought right.

The duke of Alençon, the youngest and only remaining brother of the king, had joined himself to the *Politicians*, not from any desire to promote good government or religious toleration, aims of which his whole after-life proved him incapable, but from the desire to shake off the control of the queen-mother, and make a conspicuous position for himself.

The Protestant party had been strengthened by the return of Condé. He had found means to escape before the death of Charles IX., and, flying beyond the French frontier, had publicly abjured his forced profession of popery. Returning then to France, he had rejoined his old friends and fellow-soldiers in the south, and had been placed in command of their forces. But Henry of Navarre

\* This upright statesman, on his dismissal from office, had retired to his own estate to live in privacy with his family. But the atrocious events of St. Bartholomew's day filled him with such horror and indignation that life became bitter to him. "These," he said, "these are the counsels they have long been giving the king. I saw to what they tended. And now, would that I might die, since it was not granted me to prevent such crimes! Why are the assassins of Coligny so long in finding their way to the dwelling of L'Hôpital?" Roman Catholic though he was, his desire to see justice dealt to all parties had made him so obnoxious to the court, that his death was resolved on, and a party of soldiers in the duke of Anjou's pay was sent to attack his house. His servants in alarm ran to inform him of their approach. "Open wide the gates," he said. "Let no one hinder them from entering. Lead them to me: I have lived long enough." But some gentlemen hearing what was doing, arrived just in time to prevent the assassins from accomplishing the violence they meditated. L'Hôpital, however, did not live long afterwards; brought down to the grave by sorrow for the crimes which had been perpetrated, and the calamities which he foresaw coming upon his country.

was still at the court, a prisoner at large, too well content to surrender himself to the fascinations of the charmed circle with which the wily Catherine had taken care to surround him. Scrupling at no wickedness to gain her ends, she sacrificed without pity the honour and virtue of her son-in-law, and as her daughter Margaret informs us, would have sacrificed his life also, if she had found a favourable opportunity of so doing. The beautiful but abandoned women who followed in her train were charged to detain him at the court, and to penetrate, if they could, his most secret thoughts and designs. His wife, Margaret (too apt a pupil in the school of such a mother), had rival gallants of her own, and made no attempt to interfere with the intrigues and machinations of which her husband was the subject.

More than three years had passed away since the fatal St. Bartholomew's day, and Henry of Navarre seemed to have forgotten all the high promise of his youth. But one night two Huguenot gentlemen, who waited on him and slept in his chamber, heard their master sing in a low tone part of the eighty-eighth Psalm, as one burdened and afflicted and seeking help. Filled with wonder, they started up, and asked if indeed he still had any heart for the work of God. "If so," they said, "why linger here to be a woman's slave when your friends are in arms? The defenders of your cradle will rally round you if you call them. We were planning to take flight to-morrow; but if we were gone, your new servants would make away with you without scruple, if bidden and bribed to do it." Then they told him how he was duped by pretended friends; that his mistresses were but Queen Catherine's spies; that the honours and preferments she so often promised, but never bestowed on him, were mere glittering lures held out to keep him in her toils.

Henry's spirit was roused at last. His resolve was taken: he would no longer be a party to his own disgrace; the Huguenot camp was the home for him, not the palace of his fair-seeming but deadly foes. A plan of escape

was accordingly arranged ; and in order to evade the spies who watched his steps, it was settled that he should distance all his companions at a great hunting party soon to be given. The day came, and the scheme was successfully carried out. Relays of fresh horses carried him far away before his flight was even suspected. He rode rapidly and in silence from the forest of Senlis to the bank of the Loire. Once across the river, he felt safe from pursuit, and then with a deep sigh he thanked God for his deliverance. "In Paris," he said, "they made away with my mother, they murdered the admiral, and all our best servants, and, but for the mercy of Heaven, they would have made away with me also. I will never return thither, unless I am dragged back." Then resuming his usual light and jesting tone, he added, "I regret but two things which I have left behind me in the city—the mass and my wife. As for the mass, I shall try to do without it, but my wife I must contrive to see again." The future duke de Sully, now fifteen years of age, accompanied him in his flight, and from that time, whether in peace or war, was seldom absent from his master's side.

Henry speedily abjured his profession of Romanism, and was joyfully welcomed to the camp by his friends La Nouë, Du Plessis-Mornay, and many other brave men who formed part of the force assembled at Moulins. Condé had obtained the help of the Elector Palatine, whose son, Duke Casimir, led a large body of well-appointed troops to join the Huguenots. The princes had altogether 30,000 men under their command, and had it not been for Alençon's selfishness and impatience of a colleague, the Huguenot leaders might have compelled the court to grant their just demands. The king, on the other hand, had neither troops nor money, and the frivolous degrading habits of his life deprived him of any hope of support from personal attachment. His sole dependence was on the intrigues of the queen-mother : and the single object which Catherine proposed to herself

was the dissolution of the confederacy. She might defy its members when separated; but to break their union, it was necessary that she should deceive. Deception accordingly she employed without stint. Accompanied by her train of women, whom she styled her "flying squadron," she repaired in person to the camp, cajoled the commanders, heaped promise upon promise, and, strange to say, was believed. The only member of the confederacy who was not deceived was Alençon, for as no price was deemed exorbitant which could secure his abandonment of the Huguenots, he received everything he desired to have; a very large yearly pension, and the three provinces of Berry, Touraine, and Anjou, in addition to the domains he possessed before. As for the Huguenots, if it had ever been intended that the treaty now negotiated by Catherine should be put in execution, there would have been little or nothing more which they could reasonably have demanded. Complete equality of civil rights was promised them, with freedom of worship in every town in France, excepting Paris, and the place in which the court might at any time be residing. To Condé was promised the government of Picardy, which had been held by his father; to Duke Casimir, subsidies for the payment of his force, and certain privileges to the Protestants of some of the towns on the eastern frontier.

"The treaty was signed. The fine army which had in its hand the destinies of France melted away like icicles beneath the summer sun." Alençon resorted to his new provinces, secure of their possession; but no faith was kept with any one of his late allies. The Germans in vain demanded their subsidies. Condé repaired to Picardy, but was refused entrance by the king's officers who held the fortified towns. La Nouë, Du Plessis-Mornay, and their comrades, who had taken up arms to secure, once for all, the free exercise of their religion, soon confessed that their opportunity was gone, and no one advantage gained of all that they had hoped for.



But although none of the engagements made with the Protestants were performed, the mere fact that such advantages had been promised, had excited great discontent in Paris, where the popular rancour against the Reformed, sedulously fomented by the clergy, was fast ripening into confirmed disaffection towards the reigning king and all his lineage. In the late treaty, Henry III., one of the chief instigators and abettors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, had been made to say with shameless effrontery that it had taken place to his great grief and displeasure. This declaration was particularly offensive to the great multitude who, from fanaticism or other motives, were so far from regretting what had occurred, that they eagerly desired the extermination of all their Huguenot fellow-subjects. For some years past, associations in defence of the Church had been formed in several of the provinces. They now united together in a much bolder and more comprehensive scheme, and formed the famous confederacy known as *The League*. The ostensible objects of the League were the maintenance of the Roman Catholic religion, the safety of the king, and the destruction of the Protestants; the objects secretly aimed at by its authors were as follows:—to bring the duke of Alençon (now since his accession of territory, usually called duke of *Anjou*) to trial and condemnation for his late alliance with heretics; to depose the weak, vicious Henry III., as being descended from the *usurper* Hugh Capet, and consign him to a cloister, as the last of the feeble Merovingian kings had been consigned by Pepin, the founder of the Carlovingian dynasty; and finally, to transfer the crown to Henry, duke of Guise, who claimed to be descended from Charlemagne, the greatest of that Carlovingian line.

Some portions of the engagement by which all the Leaguers bound themselves were to the following effect: “We swear to devote our lives and our property to promote the success of the Holy League, and to pursue to the death all who may oppose it. A chief shall be elected



as soon as possible, to whom every member of the League shall render obedience. All persons who refuse to join themselves to the League shall be accounted enemies, and pursued by force of arms. The chief shall have the sole authority to decide all disputes which may arise between the members of the League, and they shall not have recourse to the ordinary magistrates without his express permission." Thus all the authority pertaining to the throne was transferred by the Leaguers to their future chief, who was to be the duke of Guise.

Pope Gregory XIII. encouraged the confederates, and Philip II. promised to assist them with troops and money. The League, spreading its ramifications all over the kingdom, and increasing the number of its members by tens and hundreds of thousands, had assumed most formidable proportions before the king was aware of its existence. In the midst of these plots he summoned the States-general to meet at Blois (December, 1576); in accordance with one of the conditions insisted upon by the Protestants in the late treaty. At Paris they knew well that the Guise faction was all-powerful. At Blois they hoped for greater freedom of deliberation, and proposing to appeal from the court to the nation, they trusted that deputies gathered from the whole kingdom would see that it was impossible to establish a solid peace on any other terms than those of letting Catholic and Huguenot worship God each in his own way, without hindrance or restriction. The result falsified their expectations. The Leaguers, by all methods, whether of violence or artifice, hindered the Protestants and the Politicians from voting in the electoral meetings, in consequence of which *one* Protestant deputy alone was returned, while the majority of those elected had already joined the League, and were entirely under the influence of the Guises. Mere toleration was hateful in their eyes, much more equality of rights.

While the deliberations were yet pending, Du Plessis-Mornay, anxious to avert if it were possible another out-

break of civil war, published an eloquent "*Remonstrance to the States of Blois*," in which, under the assumed character of a Roman Catholic gentleman, he argues that persecution had proved a failure, and that it was high time to heal the wounds of France, instead of inflicting new ones. "Men say," he reasons, "that they cannot allow two religions in France. For myself, I wish there were but one, so long as God were duly served. But since we cannot always have our wish, our wisdom is to desire only what is attainable." Then, showing that France was not the first country which had had to debate the question, and that the wise and powerful Charles V., with the resources of Germany, Italy, and Spain at his disposal, had tried, and vainly tried, to destroy Protestantism in its infancy, he proceeds: "Then came our turn, and if we consider the course we have taken with these people, we shall see that nothing is left for us but either to be involved in one common ruin, or for each party to let the other enjoy peace and freedom of conscience. We began with burning them at slow fires, making no distinction as to sex or condition; but so far were we from consuming them, that they extinguished our fires with their blood, and grew and multiplied while the flames kindled around them. Then we tried to drown them, and lo! they came up refreshed from the stream. We have made them drunk with wine at the marriage feast, and then murdered them in their sleep; and presently we have seen them stand up before our eyes, as strong and as bold as ever. We must try another mode. As we cannot kill them, we must let them live. As we have not gained our end by force, we must try them with love. As war has completely failed, in which we have spared neither our goods nor our lives, nor (sooth to say) our honour, we must now let them live among us in peace."

Words like these were spoken to deaf ears. The Leaguers triumphed. But they aimed not merely at the proscription of the Protestants, but at the degradation of the throne; claimed that measures which they unani-

mously voted should have the force of law, and that thirty-six members, chosen by themselves, should form part of the king's council. To these invasions of his prerogative, the king refused assent ; but he concurred with the States in the resolution that the profession of one religion only should be permitted in France. And in the hope of defeating the plots of the Guises, he signed the League, and declared himself its chief ; thereby descending from his position as the *king of France*, to become the mere head of a cabal. This degrading step did not restore to him any of the influence and authority he had lost. The reckless extravagance with which he wasted the royal revenue on frivolous and scandalous objects, had excited general discontent ; and now the States, though they required him to suppress the religion of the Huguenots, refused to grant any money for the war which would be necessary for that end. They even decided that he could not lawfully alienate any portion of the crown domain to procure money, saying that the domain of the crown belonged to the nation ; the king for the time being was merely a tenant for life.\*

The Huguenots did not wait to be attacked, but began to gather their forces, and before the States-general dispersed, the king of Navarre and Condé were heading insurgent armies, one in Guienne, the other in Poitou. Guise, on the other hand, pressed for war, and the enthusiasm of the Leaguers seconding his efforts, two armies presently appeared in the field on their side. Some towns were taken by the Catholics, who gained a more important advantage, however, by the defection of the Politicians and their chief Montmorency, whom the intrigues and promises of the court won over from the Huguenot alliance. The king meanwhile perceiving that Guise and his faction were gaining more and more

\* Many other claims were advanced by the States at this time, tending, as on former occasions, to promote *civil liberty* by securing the right of the people to a share in the government, to restrain the sale of judicial offices, &c. But, as usual, *nothing was done*.

popularity by means of the war, resolved to put an end to it as soon as possible, and suddenly offered peace on favourable terms to the king of Navarre. A treaty was signed at Poitiers and Bergerac, in September, 1577, and an interval of quietness followed, during which, had Henry III. exerted himself to carry the conditions of the peace into effect, a remedy might at length have been found for the distress and disorder of the kingdom. Besides permitting the exercise of the Reformed religion, "until it might please God by means of a good, free, and lawful general council to unite all his subjects to the Catholic Church," the treaty had declared all *leagues* and *confederacies* annulled and abolished. And a goodly number of loyal subjects, unconnected with the Guise faction, and men of worth and note, both Catholic and Protestant, would willingly have rallied round the throne, and upheld the king against the designs of the disaffected, if it had been possible to rouse him to any virtuous exertion or sense of honour. But Henry had sunk in the mire of vice and effeminacy still deeper, if possible, than before. Crime stalked abroad in the court, where "nothing was more cheaply regarded than a man's life, unless, indeed, it were a woman's honour." The king sold pardons, and rewarded murder; and every species of excess was openly committed and gloried in.

While the court of Henry III. was becoming a byword and a reproach, that of Henry of Navarre was not so pure from taint as his best friends desired to see it. Catherine, anxious either to attract him back to Paris, or to involve him so deeply in the pursuit of pleasure and dissipation that the edge of his arms might be blunted, journeyed to the court of her son-in-law at Nerac, and assailed him on his weak side by the shameful arts she well knew how to employ. Her success was but too complete. "He sank for the time into the mere voluptuary, degrading himself to the level of those who knew no restraining law, and pretended to no elevated sentiment. . . . So completely was zeal for religion quenched

in baser feelings, that the renewed war which broke out in 1580 was called '*The Lovers' War*,' and owed its origin to unworthy female intrigues and the jealousies of rival gallants, rather than to any higher motive."\* Nor was the rising of the Huguenots universal; the men of La Rochelle and of several other important places honestly avowing that they saw no just cause for resuming hostilities.

Compared with the temptations of peace and inaction, however, the camp was a school of virtue to Henry of Navarre; "and the rude discipline of war always brought out the nobler qualities which won for him the zealous devotion of friends and fellow-religionists in the first instance, and the heart of the nation in later days, when his cause had triumphed."

At the end of a few months, another peace, on conditions advantageous to the Reformed, was concluded by means of the duke of Anjou, who wanted to carry the Huguenot forces away to fight for him in the Netherlands. The war of independence was still carried on by the people of the Netherlands with determined resolution. In 1579, the northern states had signed the famous union of the Seven United Provinces. They offered the sovereignty of their country to Queen Elizabeth, and on her refusing it, conferred it on the duke of Anjou, who was negotiating a marriage with the English queen, and whom Elizabeth supplied with funds to raise and maintain troops for the defence of the States against Spain. His matrimonial views were disappointed; and as sovereign of the United Provinces he soon proved himself utterly unworthy of the trust they had reposed in him. "He conspired against those who had made him their prince, attempted to seize Antwerp by surprise, was overpowered by the inhabitants, and saved himself by flight," after giving unequivocal proofs of his treacherous and tyrannical disposition. Returned to France, he found himself an object of aversion or contempt to all parties; and died, some said of chagrin, at Château Thierry, June, 1584.

\* Rev. J. H. Gurney.



“Like all the princes of that fated house, he died young and left no heir.” No one mourned for him ; but his death had an importance which would not otherwise have belonged to it, as removing the only heir who stood between the crown of France and Henry of Navarre.

Since the conclusion of the unworthy contest called The Lovers' War, the kingdom had been nominally at peace, yet desultory warfare raged from one end of France to the other. Civil war had produced its usual demoralizing effect ; and there were numerous captains now on both sides who fought neither for their king nor their professed faith, but for hate, or for plunder on their own account. Twenty armies roamed abroad under their separate leaders, and were quartered like foreign invaders on their helpless countrymen. Skirmishes, surprises, the sudden muster for some inviting foray, the speedy dispersion of the force for want of provisions or pay, these were the events which made up the history of many a campaign. But although no fame was to be won amidst such scenes, Henry of Navarre played his part in them in a manner which strengthened his cause, proving himself “not only the gallant soldier whose spirit kindled with the battle-cry, and the skilful leader whose genius for war seemed an instinct, but generous to friends and enemies, sagacious amid difficulties which taxed prudence to the uttermost, hopeful when other men despaired. His faults were those to which Frenchmen were lenient, especially in an age of almost universal laxity ; his virtues were all of the popular kind. His chivalrous contempt of danger was shared by hundreds ; but far more attractive and endearing were his courtesy, his ready wit, his frank good humour, the affability which sank the prince in the fellow-soldier and companion, the never-failing gaiety of heart which lightened his own burdens, and kept up the spirits of his followers. Though at the head of the Protestant party, he would allow of no distinctions in his camp between Roman Catholic and Huguenot, and when his old



friends showed jealousy of their new allies, he would tell them sportively, 'If you trouble me with your disputes, I will love them best, and indeed I may well do so ; for you are fighting for your own cause when you rally round me ; but they come to me for love, and nothing else.' Surrounded by spies, and often watched by bravoës, who made sure of reward from Spain if they could find him unguarded, and deal the fatal blow, he went abroad but scantily attended, and while life was given him would enjoy freedom with it. Sometimes a ride from the camp would bring him to the house of some decayed gentleman who had claims upon him for past services,—sometimes to a company of peasants whose little all had been swept away by the desolating wars. Visits like these were his recreations, and no entreaties of his more cautious followers could persuade him to forego the pleasure they afforded him. 'Never fear for me,' he used to say to them ; 'history nowhere tells us of a king murdered in a hovel.' "

While Navarre was binding the hearts of his followers more and more firmly to his cause, Guise also, on the other side, was steadily growing in influence and power. The king had fallen into such deep disrepute, that the worthiest of the royalists, men whose loyalty bound them to the throne like soldiers standing fast by their colours, turned away in shame and sorrow from a monarch whose folly and vice outwent all that had degraded royalty in former generations. Some drew off to the Huguenots, attracted by the brilliant qualities of their leader, and seeing in the triumph of his cause the best hope of peace and union for their distracted country. But a much larger body became supporters of the League, which had secretly struck its roots wider and deeper, notwithstanding the edict which declared it suppressed and abolished. That the inheritance of the throne should devolve upon a Protestant was a thought of horror to all the devotees in the land. These all gave their influence and good wishes to the ambitious house of Lorraine. Guise had

also at his command an army of priests backed by the power of Rome, a large number of the old nobility who hated novelties in religion, and above all a great body of eager partisans in Paris, who gloried in their leader, and were ready to rise either against king or heretic at his command. Possessed of all the gifts which captivate the multitude, Guise knew well both how to rouse their passions and how to control their will. "He moved like a king at the head of the princes of his house ; and their noble bearing might well make them pass for the ruling family." Important help was promised him by the Spanish court. Philip, whose anxiety to prevent France from affording support to the Netherlands, made him careless whose side he espoused so long as he could rekindle and keep alive the flame of civil war, had previously offered large subsidies to Henry of Navarre. "Think," said the Spanish envoys to Henry's representative, De Mornay, "what a position yours is. The Catholic party are imploring from us the aid which you refuse ; they are all-powerful, with a prince at their head as brave as yours. Your master has neither allies nor troops ; king, though he be, he is at once poor and proscribed." "Be it so," was De Mornay's answer ; "because he is proscribed and poor, he will not prove that his misfortunes are all deserved by turning traitor now. He will stand up valiantly for his faith, his friends, and his life, but always like a good Frenchman, and a right worthy knight." "You do not know what you are doing," said the Spanish diplomatists ; "we have other chapmen ready for our bargain."

The Leaguers now took the bold step of setting up the cardinal of Bourbon, uncle to the king of Navarre, as the heir presumptive to the throne, alleging that Henry of Navarre, as a heretic, had forfeited his right of succession : and they actually concluded a treaty by their own authority with the king of Spain, the object of which was to root out heresy from France. Nothing was omitted by Guise which could inflame popular feeling against the

Huguenots ; preachers and writers emulated one another in the work of calumny, and the Jesuits above all others. The rigorous punishments which had been inflicted on the Seminary Priests in England, whose plots had so long and so frequently endangered the life of Elizabeth, were the theme of declaimers in every pulpit of Paris. Engravings picturing every process of the fearful penalty which the English law adjudged to high treason were publicly exhibited, and agents hired by the Guises, mingled among the spectators, explained the horrible details, and whispered that such would be the fate of faithful Roman Catholics in France, should Navarre ever ascend the throne.

The Leaguers, meanwhile, were in treasonable negotiation with the duke of Savoy, who was to seize on Dauphiné and Provence, but Navarre discovered the plot, and at once made it known to the French court. For this and other reasons, the king professed the warmest friendship for Henry of Navarre ; and the latter was on the point of setting out for Paris, to join his army to the royal forces, when he received the news that everything was yielded to the Guises.

The king had, in fact, been reduced to the most wretched and despicable state of vacillation. He could not make head against either of the two parties which divided the country, and he dreaded the predominance of either. He hated the Huguenots for their faith ; he hated the Guises for their ambition. Following in the steps of his mother, he aimed to keep both factions alive, and to enfeeble them by perpetual strife ; but neither his skill nor his resources were sufficient to carry out this crooked, complicated policy ; and before his miserable career came to an end, he was forced to sue each party in turn. Before committing himself wholly to the League, he had endeavoured to prevail upon Navarre to abjure the Reformed faith. Henry refused ; but published a "*Declaration against the Calumnies of the League*," which expressed his tolerant sentiments, and refuted the

slandrous aspersions which Guise's agents had cast upon him.

Prompted by Catherine, who hoped to strengthen her own position by an alliance with the Leaguers, the king obeyed their bidding, and promulgated an edict (called the *Edict* or *Treaty of Nemours*), July, 1585, which revoked all the concessions that had ever been made to the Huguenots, and interdicted, on pain of death, the profession of any other than the Roman Catholic faith in all parts of the kingdom.\* To assure the Guises of his adherence to this treaty, he gave into their keeping ten fortresses, and engaged to pay the foreign troops whom the duke had enlisted. Henry of Navarre seldom desponded; but when he heard of this treaty, which involved the king's abject submission to his own enemies and the enemies of France, he covered his face, and remained awhile lost in sad thoughts; saying only, "Unhappy France! I shall not be able then to do anything for your good."

All was not lost, however, and besides the gallant men in his own ranks who were ready to risk everything for his cause, Montmorency sent to him saying, "Sire, I have read the treaty of Nemours. I am beset by the king of France and the king of Spain. But I am yours, and my friends are yours, and my army of Languedoc is yours, besides. I will wait for you at St. Paul." Henry's hopes revived; and charging Condé, Turenne, and De Mornay, to take different roads and meet him at the place appointed, he set out immediately alone and on foot to St. Paul, to concert a plan of operations with Montmorency. The war which now began is styled the "*War of the three Henriess*;" viz., Henry III., Henry, duke of Guise, and Henry, king of Navarre.

\* This prohibition was so rigorously carried out, where the Leaguers had power, that some defenceless women and children in vain solicited permission to live in any obscure retirement which the king might point out. They were all sent into exile; several other women, who had ventured to remain in Paris, were publicly burned there in 1587.

Two years passed away in indecisive campaigns. Henry of Navarre and his cousin Condé appealed to Queen Elizabeth and to the Protestant German princes for aid : the former supplied them with money, and the latter despatched a large auxiliary force to strengthen the ranks of the Reformed. The forces of the king and the League were divided into three armies ; one under Guise to oppose the Germans in the east of France, another under Joyeuse to confront the Bourbon princes in Poitou ; the third under the king himself to co-operate with either commander. Each of the three was superior in numbers to the forces of Navarre, and that under Joyeuse was composed of the best troops in France, and numbered in its ranks a great many men of high birth. At Coutras, on the 20th October, 1587, a memorable day and place in Henry's military career, he encountered the army of Joyeuse. Henry was marching with 6,000 men to join his German auxiliaries ; Joyeuse had 12,000 ; and the two hosts differed in appearance as much as in number. For on the side of the Roman Catholics there was nothing to be seen but gilded armour glittering in the sun, waving plumes and coats of velvet, and lace of gold and silver, and painted lances with their banderolles dancing in the air ; hundreds of young cavaliers carrying the ciphers and colours of their mistresses ; in fine, says Maimbourg, "an army equipped after the Persian mode, so much luxury and pomp was seen, and so much gold and silk in the habits of the men and the caparisons of the horses." But the contrary side afforded no such spectacle. There all was grave and profoundly silent. Iron and steel everywhere. Nothing but a simple scarf distinguished the officers from the soldiers. The gentlemen seemed as proud of their poverty as of their scars. Veterans in military service, their ranks were well closed ; every troop moved in perfect order. When all was ready for action, the army knelt down, and one of the chaplains recited a short prayer. Joyeuse saw them, and exclaimed, "They tremble, the cowards ! They are at



confession !” “Not so, my lord,” said an old officer who knew the Huguenots better than his commander ; “when they put themselves in that posture they mean to conquer or to die.” The prayer ended, Navarre rose up, and turning to his cousins, the princes of Condé and Conti, and the count of Soissons, he said, “We are all Bourbons, and by God’s help I will show that I am the elder of our house this day.”

Proud of his numbers and equipments, Joyeuse had exclaimed that not a man of the Huguenot force should escape, and had ordered his soldiers to give no quarter, not even to the king of Navarre himself. The contest was short and desperate. But at the end of two hours the rout of the Roman Catholic army was complete ; standards, baggage, and artillery remained in the possession of Navarre, 3,000 of the enemy’s soldiers, and more than 400 men of honourable birth, were left dead on the field of battle. Henry’s moderation in the hour of triumph was yet more glorious than the victory. Joyeuse was amongst the slain ; he would gladly have saved him, and did all in his power to check the carnage, rescuing several of the enemy from his soldiers with his own hands. His own loss had been very small, but when asked what conditions of peace he would demand after so signal a victory, he replied, “Just the same as I would have accepted after a defeat ; a renewal of the Edict of Poitiers ;” and he immediately despatched a letter to the king, praying that peace might be granted, and that he might no longer in self-defence be compelled to shed the blood of Frenchmen.

Peace, however, was very far from the thoughts of the League. And Henry did not follow up his victory. A large portion of his little army consisted of volunteers, who had been hastily gathered, and were unprovided for a lengthened campaign, and many of them had left their homes unprotected. Others were overcharged with booty, the spoil of the vanquished, which they wished to place in safety. To have reaped lasting benefit from his triumph at Coutras, it would have been necessary for



Navarre to have effected a junction with his German auxiliaries ; but instead of using his influence to persuade his captains to march eastward without loss of time, he willingly received their various pleas for dispersion ; and enthralled by his besetting weakness, hastened across Gascony into Bearn, there to offer his hard-won trophies at the feet of one of his mistresses. The German army, meanwhile, who had entered France, but were strangers to the country, knew not where to find their allies ; wandered abroad for pillage, and were twice surprised and routed with great slaughter by Guise. Before they could regain the frontier in their disastrous retreat, famine, disease, and the sword had destroyed one half of them ; and the dissipation of this numerous armament, whose invasion had excited great irritation and alarm, lifted the duke of Guise to a new height of popularity. Even the king was rendered popular for a short time by the success of his formidable coadjutor ; he entered Paris with a show of triumphal pomp, and once more heard the long-forgotten cry, "Vive le Roi !" But he was quickly lost again in frivolous occupations, "studying his grammar," says the chronicler, "and learning his declensions, in the midst of his mignons, his parrots, and his pet dogs." Meanwhile, Guise was becoming virtually king of Paris. The city was governed at that time by municipal magistrates, the citizens kept the guard of the walls and gates, the keys of which were committed to the charge of the Syndics. Paris was divided into sixteen quarters or sections ; and in each section there was a council or committee, which watched over the interest of the "Holy League," and gave an account of its proceedings to the chief council, of which the duke of Guise was the president. The chiefs of the sections formed likewise a subordinate council, which (from their being *sixteen* in number) is known in the history of the time as *The Sixteen*. The Sixteen formed a great many plots for taking Henry III. prisoner ; but, unknown to themselves, their designs were always betrayed by one of the plotters.

The king had thus been able to frustrate their plans, but he dared not proceed against them, so great was their power in the city. Warned, however, that a new and dangerous scheme was in agitation, the king, in the spring of 1588, assembled 4,000 Swiss in the suburbs, as a reinforcement to his ordinary body-guard, and transported a quantity of arms to the palace of the Louvre. Then, suddenly taking courage, and hearing that Guise was approaching Paris, he sent a letter forbidding him to enter the city. Guise came, nevertheless, but passed through the gates with seven attendants only. Presently, however, his escort was swelled by hundreds and thousands of men and women : it seemed as if the whole city had turned out to greet him. Happy was the man who could touch his hand, or even his clothes ; they called him a new Gideon, a new Maccabæus, "the Pillar of the Church," and shouted blessings on his name. He alighted from his horse at the door of the queen-mother, who conducted him to the king's presence. "Why have you disobeyed my orders ?" said Henry, angrily. He had almost made up his mind to have the duke murdered then and there, and amongst his guards there was more than one man quite willing to deal the fatal blow if ordered to do so. His resolution failed at the last moment. Guise perceived that the attendants of the king looked darkly upon him, and, saying in a submissive tone that he had not received \* the king's letter, he withdrew. The next day he returned to the palace with a powerful escort, and more disposed to give the law than to take it. And now he demanded that the war should be pushed forward vigorously till the heretics were exterminated, and that all the officers and ministers of state who were not in his interest,

\* Though the court was indulging in extravagant expense and luxury, the king's treasury was so empty, and his credit so dilapidated, that the royal treasurer refused to advance the twenty-five crowns necessary to send the king's letter by a special messenger. It was transmitted through the ordinary post, and Guise denied that it reached him.

should be banished from the court. The weak king consented to all that was asked.

Then came the *Day of the Barricades*. Indignant at the thralldom in which he was held, the king ordered fresh troops into the city, and ventured to march at their head, with flags flying, and sound of fife and drum. But presently their music was drowned by the tocsin which rang out from every parish church. The forces of The Sixteen were ready for action, and went to work instantly, tore up the pavement of the streets, stretched chains across them, and threw up barricades everywhere with stones, and beams, and casks full of clay. The soldiers found themselves hemmed in on all sides, and attacked by a furious mob. Even the windows of the houses were filled with women armed with stones and combustibles to throw at them, and monks rushed from their convents into the streets, stirring up the passions of the rioters, and proclaiming that their work was the work of God. The king had reached his palace and sent in terror to Guise, begging him to calm the people and save the lives of the soldiers. The duke replied coldly, "They are wild bulls broken loose, I cannot restrain them." But when he thought enough had been done, he went out unarmed, with nothing but a cane in his hand, and at sight of him, the raging multitude was transported with joy, the barricades were levelled at his word, the fighting ceased, and the soldiers, having been first disarmed, were allowed to retreat to the palace.

Catherine ventured out amidst the tumult to confer with the duke, and while she was negotiating terms of agreement with him, the king escaped from the Louvre, and fled with all speed, scarcely halting until he reached Chartres. Yet at the end of a few weeks, and by means of Queen Catherine, a treaty was concluded; Henry consenting to treat with Guise as if he had been in very truth a rival sovereign. By this treaty, the king pledged himself to root out the Huguenots to the very last man, and to disinherit his rightful heir, Henry of Navarre; he

also created Guise lieutenant-general of France with unlimited power, and surrendered to him some of the strongest places in the kingdom for a long term of years. Moreover, he invited the duke to receive the Holy Sacrament with him, that he might swear to him cordial forgiveness and friendship before the altar. "For the future," said the king, "I shall devote myself to prayer and penitence, and the burden of the state may devolve on the queen my mother, and on my cousin of Guise."

Yet at this very time he seems to have been meditating the murder of the dangerous subject of whom he dared not rid himself in any other way. Guise partly owed his popularity to his professed desire of reforming all those abuses of the government which pressed hardly upon the property and freedom of the people. One condition of the treaty he had recently concluded with the king was that the States-general should be convoked forthwith, and they had accordingly been summoned in July, 1588, to assemble at Blois, for Henry would not again trust himself in Paris.

The only kingly quality of which Henry III. could boast, was that of speaking in public with much grace and dignity. On the opening of the States, he addressed the assembly in an eloquent speech, delivered with apparent feeling ; he asserted his right to the loyal obedience of his people, and ventured even to censure the inordinate ambition of some of his subjects. All present knew that the princes of the house of Guise were the "subjects" alluded to ; but almost all the deputies elected to the States were Leaguers, or otherwise bound to the Guise faction, and all eyes turned towards the duke, who sat superbly haughty in his place beneath the throne, as if he were indeed the very sovereign of the realm. So secure, indeed, did he feel himself in the number and strength of his partisans, that he scarcely affected to restrain the imprudent friends who styled him the new Pepin, born to revive the glory of the ancient line, and consign the last representative of the effete house of

Valois to the cloister. His sister, the fiery duchess of Montpensier, wore conspicuously in her girdle a pair of gold scissors, with which to bestow the tonsure on the modern Chilperic. All these rash speeches were reported to the king, and confirmed him in his murderous design. He had been afraid of Spain, Guise's most formidable ally, but Spain had just received a great check. Her "invincible Armada," sent for the subjugation of England, had been utterly discomfited and wrecked, and there was little prospect that Philip would, at present, enter into any new war with his neighbours. It was not, however, until the close of the year that Henry carried his plot into execution, nor was his secret so closely kept that no rumour of it had reached the duke. But to every warning which his friends conveyed to him, he answered scornfully, "The king dare not attack me."

Early on the morning of the 23rd December, he was informed that the king desired to speak with him on business of importance. Henry had risen betimes that day, posted the assassins (who were certain gentlemen of his guard), and with terribly preposterous devotion, desired his chaplain to say mass, that he might be prospered in the enterprise he had in hand. At the moment of entering the king's chamber, Guise was stabbed by the captain of the guard, and despatched with repeated blows by the others. His brother the Cardinal Guise, of whom the king had stood almost equally in dread, was arrested at the same time in another part of the palace, and carried to prison, where he also was murdered the following day. When all was over, the king came to look on the dead body of his enemy, and spurned it with his feet contemptuously, even as Guise had trampled on the corpse of Coligny. Then he went exulting to his mother; "I have made myself *king of France* this morning, for I have despatched the *king of Paris*." "Take care, my son, that you are not soon *king of nothing*," was her answer. She was sick and feeble, and consumed with disappointment and mortification at finding herself excluded from



state secrets, and disregarded by all parties. Since the treaty she had negotiated for her son with the duke of Guise in the summer, increasing infirmity had compelled her to withdraw from active participation in public affairs; and in her seclusion no one concerned himself about her. She died a fortnight after the murder (5th January, 1589), at the age of 70; and her decease was no more lamented, or even remarked, than if she had been the most insignificant creature in the kingdom.

The States-general were still sitting. For months past their orators had been debating concerning the rights of the people, and exposing the grievances against which so many successive assemblies had remonstrated in vain. The reforms for which the States of 1588 contended would have gone very far to secure France against the dangers of despotic government: power to control the levying of taxes; a voice in the election of their magistrates and other authorities, an important share in the work of legislation; all these were among the rights claimed for the people. But if their words were brave, their actions were feeble. After the murder of the duke of Guise, the king arrested the most conspicuous of his partisans in the assembly, and their brethren did not venture to resist, or even to remonstrate. On the contrary, they took leave of the king at the close of the session, a month afterwards, in a speech extolling "his royal virtues;" but says one, "We parted from one another, bewailing what had passed, and looking forward with terror to what was to come, believing that France was about to be torn in pieces."

Paris had, in fact, been thrown into a state of frenzy by the murder of its idolized chief; the flame of rebellion spread rapidly through the kingdom, and several important provinces and cities declared for the League against the king. Henry had but half accomplished his work; he had murdered the duke of Guise and the cardinal, but he had left at large their brother Aumale, the duke of Mayenne, and several other leading members



of their faction ; and instead of putting himself at the head of his troops and marching on Paris to follow up the blow he had struck at the League, before its partisans had time to rally, he had relapsed into his usual indolence at Blois. But in the capital, the people were already proclaiming Mayenne lieutenant-general of the State, throwing into the Bastille all the magistrates who ventured to oppose their proceedings, and electing new ones. Men, women, and children marched by thousands in procession through the streets, invoking vengeance on the king, who was denounced and execrated from every pulpit in Paris. He endeavoured to make peace with Rome, but ineffectually, for the pope (Sixtus V.) refused to grant him absolution for the murder of the cardinal. Dangers thickened around him on every side, and but one resource remained,—to court the friendship of the king of Navarre, whom he had so lately sworn to disinherit.

To Navarre and his adherents the death of the duke of Guise was an event of the greatest importance. “Never,” said one of the leaders, “were more persons cast down and more raised up by one man’s death ; never were more plans overturned, or more years wiped out, in a single morning,” but the gain was theirs without the guilt. They could not but rejoice that the most powerful of their enemies, who had pursued them with unrelenting, untiring hatred, was removed out of the way ; but every man of honour and conscience reprobated the perfidious murder which had been committed by the king. Navarre’s first thought on hearing of it was to make fresh overtures of peace ; and being informed that the king desired to enter into alliance with him, but could not come to terms without a personal interview, he bravely ventured to risk it, though his friends hardly endured that their beloved chief should place his life in the hands of a monarch so stained with treachery and slaughter, both towards themselves and their enemies, as was Henry III. With a small escort, the king of Navarre ventured into

the midst of the royal guards, and gave the king a meeting at Plessis-les-Tours. "The ice is broken," he wrote his friend De Mornay that night, "not, I confess, without many forebodings that I was a dead man if I went on. As I crossed the river, I besought God to protect me, and He has not only heard my prayer, but has lighted up the face of the king with joy, and caused the people to receive me with acclamations, their cry being "*God save the Kings!*" He returned to his own company to sleep, but the next morning surprised the king with an early visit, attended only by a page, and by this mark of confidence so won upon him, that Henry III. thenceforth testified as much friendship for Navarre as he was capable of feeling for any one.

The two kings arranged a plan of mutual operations; and in July their united forces, amounting to 40,000 men, were before the walls of Paris; Navarre having his quarters at Meudon, Henry III. at St. Cloud, from whence he contemplated his rebellious capital with menaces of deep revenge which he was never to put in execution. Monks, Jesuits, and priests were all preaching regicide in the city. A fanatical Dominican, named Jacques Clement, inflamed by these discourses, and prompted by the duchess of Montpensier, sister of the murdered Guises, vowed to murder the king. He gained admission to his presence with forged credentials, he placed in his hands a letter purporting to be from some loyal magistrates confined in the Bastille, and while the king was reading it, plunged a knife into his bowels. The assassin was instantly despatched by the guards, but he had accomplished his purpose. At first, indeed, the wound was not considered mortal, and Navarre, who had hastened to the king on hearing what had happened, returned to his own quarters after a friendly interview. But at midnight he was sent for again; Henry III. was dying. In his last moments, he exhorted the officers who were about him to acknowledge Navarre, "the true heir," for his successor, notwithstanding their difference

of religion. As the king of Navarre entered St. Cloud, he heard the cry, "The king is dead!" A few moments afterwards, the Scottish guard came to meet him, saying, "Sire, you are our master now." Several principal officers also came immediately to salute him, but scarcely were they out of his presence, than D'Aubigné and other friends of Navarre, who had followed their chief, heard them saying, "Rather surrender ourselves to any enemy whomsoever, than endure a Huguenot king." This was enough to show that the throne of the new king would be no bed of roses.

Henry III. expired on the 2nd August, 1589, at the age of thirty-seven. He had reigned fifteen years. Never had France seemed nearer to utter ruin than at the close of his reign, divided as she was between three parties, all eager to make war upon one another.\* Provinces, cities, families, were all rent asunder: pillage, violence, and anarchy, destroying all private peace and national prosperity. The great lords stationed in the various provincial governments, had taken advantage of the weakness of the Crown to revive, as far as possible, the independence enjoyed by their ancestors in feudal times: they coined money, levied troops and taxes at their own will, and scarcely pretended to recognize the authority of the throne or of the laws. Such was the state of the kingdom when the line of Valois became extinct. That of Bourbon was now to ascend the throne, in the

\* The League prevailed in Normandy, Picardy, the Isle of France, Burgundy, Brittany, Provence, and possessed a multitude of important towns in other provinces. The king's party possessed no large province entirely, but were scattered, more or less numerous, throughout all, and possessed many towns; amongst others, Dieppe, Caen, Boulogne, Blois, Tours, Limoges, Bordeaux, Brest, Rennes, St. Malo. The Huguenots had a considerable portion of Dauphiné, besides Guienne and Poitou, the large towns of which, however, were in the hands of the king's party. Sedan and the principality of Bouillon, Rochefort, La Rochelle, Saumur, St. Jean d'Angely, and several other towns, were also possessed by the Huguenots.

person of Henry of Navarre, who became the restorer of the monarchy, and gave France once more the blessing of peace and a settled government.

*Note.*—Amongst the murders of these evil days must be noted that of the prince of Condé, who perished by poison in his 35th year, March, 1588, at the instigation, it was feared, of his wife, Charlotte Catherine de la Tremouille. She was brought to trial, and even condemned to the Question, but having given birth to a son shortly after her husband's death, she escaped that peril and indignity. She was, nevertheless, detained in prison for several years; and obtained her liberty at length by abjuring the Reformed faith, and consenting that her son should be brought up as a Roman Catholic, in which profession the princes of that house ever afterwards continued.

## CHAPTER XLII.

Rejoicings at the Murder of Henry III.—Dissensions among the Royalists.—Paris held by the Leaguers.—Battles of Arques and Ivry.—Siege of Paris, 1590.—Council of Mantes, 1591.—Spain endeavours to place an Infanta on the throne.—States-general of the League, 1593.—Abjuration of Henry IV., 1593.—Submission of Paris, 1594.

FROM 1589 A.D. TO 1594.

THE news of the assassination of Henry III. was received in Paris with transports of indecent joy. The duchess of Montpensier embraced the first man who brought the tidings, and then ordered her coach and drove all over Paris, calling out "Good news," and exciting the people to make merry. Feastings and bonfires were seen on all sides. The mother of the regicide, a poor peasant woman, was sought out, brought to Paris, and entertained with the greatest honour by the duchess; while pictures of her son were placed in the churches, and throngs of people knelt before them, crying, "St. Jacques Clement, pray for us!" Words sacred to the Divine Redeemer were applied with disgusting profanity to the murderer, and Sixtus V. was not ashamed publicly to commend the man who had thus executed the sentence of the Church, and ordered that a magnificent service should be performed in honour of his memory.

Paris had no thought of acknowledging Henry of Navarre for king. He was a heretic, incapable of wearing the crown of France, said the Leaguers; and they proclaimed the old cardinal de Bourbon (who was in custody at Tours) under the title of Charles X. Meanwhile, in the camp at St. Cloud the royalist chiefs and officers were telling Henry that he must now choose between the

mean condition of a king of Navarre and the high estate of a king of France ; but that to attain the latter, he must become a Catholic. Henry was much moved, and changed colour ; but presently recovering himself, he said, " It cannot be that these are the sentiments of all who are here present. What ! to take me by the throat at such a moment as this, and think to drag me to the point whither none could force crowds of obscure persons who have professed my faith ! From whom could you expect such a change but from a man without any religion at all ! And would you have an atheist for your king, and go more hopefully to battle under the auspices of a perjured apostate ? True, the king of Navarre is poor as you say ; but poverty has not yet bowed him to weakness or dishonour : his first act of royalty shall not be the sacrifice of soul and conscience. I appeal to your maturer thoughts. Those who fear to remain with us, who are intimidated by the brief prosperity of the enemies of the State, have free leave to depart : let them seek pay under haughty masters elsewhere. I shall find some among my Catholic comrades who are loyal Frenchmen and men of honour." " Sire," replied one of those so addressed, " you are the king of brave men, and none but cowards will desert you." But nevertheless eight hundred gentlemen and nine regiments forsook the royal standard. Some went over to the Leaguers ; some retired to their own homes. The Swiss mercenaries of Henry III. transferred their allegiance to Henry of Navarre, and these, with a faithful little band of Huguenots, and a sprinkling of Roman Catholic lords with their retainers, constituted all the force on which he could permanently depend, for the larger portion of his Huguenot friends and soldiers were compelled for want of pay to return home when they had served a few months.

Henry was unable with the diminished force at his command to continue the siege of Paris ; after protecting the royalist possessions in Champagne and Picardy by detachments, he withdrew with the main body into



Normandy, to await promised aid from England. Hostilities were not renewed till the middle of September, for Mayenne, always indolent, had now become more so from disease, and Sixtus V. foretold his discomfiture, when he learnt that the chief of the League sat more hours at table than "*the Bearnais*" allowed himself in bed.

He marched from Paris at the head of 25,000 men, confident of victory and loudly boasting that he was going to take the Bearnais and bring him bound hand and foot to Paris. Near Dieppe he encountered Henry, who had at most 7,000 men with him. But the king had constructed an intrenched camp for his little force so skilfully, that he kept his ground against repeated attacks, and finally, after a hard-fought battle at Arques, completely routed Mayenne, and opened his own path again to the gates of Paris. A prisoner of distinction taken before the battle expressed surprise at the small number of soldiers in the royal camp. "You have not seen all my forces, you have left out of your account God and the good cause, which are on my side," answered Henry.

A reinforcement of 5,000 English arrived now, and the king marched rapidly on Paris, took several of the faubourgs, and again, but vainly, offered Mayenne battle. But he was still not strong enough to invest or storm the city, and retired again to make himself master of lower Normandy. The following spring witnessed the decisive battle of Ivry (March 14th, 1590). Henry was drawing near the capital; Mayenne was blocking the way to it; and the two armies encountered each other on the plain of Ivry, near Dreux. The king's forces were but 10,000, those of the League nearly double. Some one observed that Henry had given every order necessary for the expected battle, but none in case of a retreat. "We will have no retreat," he said, "but the battle-field." Before giving the signal for action, he advanced to the front and said, "Lord, thou knowest my thoughts. If it is for the good of the people that I should reign over them, prosper my cause, and protect my arms." Then

turning to his men, he said, "Children, if you lose sight of your standard, keep my white plume in view : you will find it in the path of honour." The caution was not unnecessary, for the brunt of the battle fell upon the king's division, and in the heat of the struggle the royal standard for a short time disappeared, but the white plume was still in front, visible to all, and nobly led the way to victory. Mayenne escaped by swimming his horse across the river Eure : his army was almost annihilated. All the artillery and baggage fell into the hands of the victors, and not the least glorious trophy, the standard of the Guises (a white pennon sown with black fleurs-de-lis), became the prize of Sully.\*

The victory of Ivry was followed by the re-investment of Paris. Henry might probably have taken it by storm, for the garrison was feeble, though the fortifications were sufficiently strong ; but he was unwilling to expose his capital to an assault which might lay it in the dust. It was upon the slow process of famine among 230,000 souls, wholly dependent upon the supplies already accumulated within the walls, that the besiegers relied for success. Soon after the blockade commenced (in May,

\* The manner in which Henry accosted this faithful servant, who had had two horses killed under him, and was covered with wounds, affords a happy instance of that frank affectionate cordiality which won for this king the hearts of his followers. Coming up to Sully after the battle, he said, "Good soldier and valiant knight, your deeds on this great day have even surpassed my expectation ; and now, in presence of all these princes and captains who are with me, I embrace you with my whole heart, and declare you to be a very true and perfect knight, not merely because you are now dubbed knight, nor as being one of the Order of St. Michael, but because of the entire and hearty affection I bear to you, out of which, and because of your long years of faithful useful service, I promise you, as I will likewise promise to the virtues of these brave men who hear me, that I will never have any accession of fortune and greatness but you shall enjoy a share in it. And now, seeing that you have many wounds, lest too much speaking should hurt you, I will go on my way to Mantes. Fare you well, my friend, and be sure that you have a good master."

1590) the old cardinal de Bourbon died. His decease produced little sensation, even among those who had acknowledged him as king; the Leaguers had, indeed, now lost their nominal sovereign, but they had struggled far more to overthrow the pretensions of Henry of Navarre than to maintain those of any rival claimant. There were two parties amongst them; one was for offering the crown to Mayenne, the senior and leading member of the Guise family; the others, consisting chiefly of the factious Parisians and of a host of monks and priests won by Spanish gold, were for repealing the Salic law, and placing on the throne the infanta Isabella, the daughter of Philip II. and of Elizabeth of France. This was the end which Philip had long had in view, and he spared neither pains nor money to attain it.

“During the summer months of 1590, the extremest privations and sufferings were endured by the people of Paris. No arts were spared to render the king and his cause odious. Again the pulpits resounded with invectives, and all evils were pronounced tolerable in comparison with submission to a prince whom the Church disowned and denounced. The people listened to the exhortations of their teachers, and caught their spirit; every one was habited like a soldier, and talked like a minister of God. Persuaded that to open their gates to a heretic king would be like letting all hell enter at once, they ran straight from the sermon to the ramparts, and the man would have been cut off from the communion of the faithful, who did not lend a hand to improve the defences of the city.” But while they were guarding themselves against the danger of a sudden assault, the supplies of food within the city were rapidly diminishing. By degrees, all the horses disappeared. Dogs and cats became the luxuries of the wealthy. The coarsest herbs, dressed up with the most unsavoury grease, were eagerly purchased, almost fought for. Once upon a time, it was rumoured, the people of a besieged city had pounded slates for food; the wretched expedient was tried, and

death, accompanied with frightful pain, was the result. The tombs were rifled of their dead, and the bones were bruised and eaten ; but this was no food for living men, and thousands, who had endeavoured thus to still the pangs of hunger, sickened and died. The horrors of Samaria and Jerusalem were renewed, and an unhappy mother was found whose eye had become evil even towards her child. Rapine and disorder were everywhere ; no house was secure against the assault of men prowling about for food. The poor famishing creatures who wished to die in quiet, crawled to the churches for refuge, and lay in crowds about the altars.

The duke of Nemours, a half-brother of the Guises, was in command, Mayenne being employed in soliciting aid from Spain ; and Nemours would listen to no cry for peace, even when the people were perishing by famine. But he drove all the “useless mouths” that he could out of the city ; and thousands of old people and children were thrust forth of the gates, and cast upon the pity of the besiegers. “Let them pass,” said Henry ; “we have food enough in the camp to spare them some.”

In the mean time, the prince of Parma, the ablest general of the time, had been ordered by the king of Spain to relieve Paris. Nemours was informed that the Spanish force would be before Paris by the middle of August ; but the citizens received the tidings with cries of despair, so impossible did it seem for human endurance to last until then. Nor would it, perhaps, have done so, but that the besiegers relaxed at length their vigilance. The king, without resources from which the long arrears of pay could be discharged, was compelled to let his troops profit by the distress of the citizens, and supplies of food, bartered for gold, were stealthily smuggled within the walls, by the very hands employed for their reduction. Parma was a fortnight longer on the road than he had expected ; but in the last week of August he drew near with a force so greatly superior to that of the besiegers, that Henry, after vainly challenging him to battle, was

forced to retreat. He withdrew to Senlis, dismissing the greater portion of his army, and retaining about him not more troops than were required for light and flying operations. Parma, having considerably strengthened the forces of the League with a detachment of Spanish troops, withdrew to Flanders early in 1591, harassed greatly in his retreat by Henry. And now the king again endeavoured to take Paris by surprise. A number of soldiers disguised as peasants, driving asses laden with sacks of flour, attempted to master one of the gates ; but their stratagem had been betrayed to the Leaguers. In the siege of Chartres, the king was more fortunate, and after nine weeks' investment, saw himself, in April, master of the city.

It was necessary that he should turn his thoughts now to other than warlike cares. The more bigoted of the Romanists who had acknowledged Henry, were dissatisfied at his continued profession of the Reformed faith ; the more careless, accustomed as they had been to the lavish luxury and profusion of Henry III., were disgusted with the poverty of their new master. "It might be well enough," they said, "for the Huguenots, animals who hated repose, and were always laced up in their cuirasses like so many tortoises, to be paid for the intolerable labours of war by the promised restorative of a battle ; but as for themselves, they expected another sort of rewards." The Huguenots complained with far more reason ; for though they had a Huguenot king, they were still a proscribed sect ; liberty of worship, the prize for which they had so long fought and suffered, was still most imperfectly conceded ; the old persecuting edicts were only suspended, not repealed. "We are told," says De Mornay, "that the Huguenots must have patience. They have been patient for fifty years—they will be still patient in the service of their king—for they are his subjects, and their affections change not ; but it is not for his credit that they should continue patient in such a matter as this ; and even if they so wished, his majesty ought not to allow it. And



what has patience to do in these matters? Every day witnesses births, marriages, and deaths. Shall our children still die unbaptized? Shall our marriages be contracted without religious solemnities, in order that they may be disputed and annulled? Shall our dead be denied the rights of sepulture? If three families meet together to pray for the king, if a mechanic sings a psalm in his workshop, if a bookseller exposes a French Bible or Testament for sale—these are offences which daily subject us to prosecution. The law, it is said, compels the prosecution. The law then should be changed, unless it is one and the same thing to pray to God for the prosperity of the king, quietly in one's own chamber, and to preach seditiously from the pulpit against his person and his government."

To remove, if possible, all these various causes of disunion, Henry summoned a council to meet at Mantes, and with the consent of all assembled passed an edict restoring to the Huguenots the rights conceded by the treaty of Bergerac in 1577, until the conclusion of a settled peace would allow the religious state of the kingdom to be more thoroughly investigated. At the same time he frustrated plans which the Catholic malcontents were forming against him, conciliating some of their leaders by his friendly demeanour.

The dissensions of the Leaguers helped to strengthen the royal cause. Mayenne had no desire to place a Spanish princess on the throne of France, while the agents of Philip II. had won the adherence of the more violent of the Guise faction, by whispering that if the infanta Isabella were accepted as the sovereign, Spain would be willing that she should marry the young duke, the son of the Guise murdered by Henry III.

Two years had worn away, and still Henry saw little prospect of a peaceable settlement of his kingdom. And now fresh succours arrived from England and Germany, and he undertook the siege of Rouen, in which the earl of Essex, the English commander, and his force, took a



larger and more hazardous share than his royal mistress approved of. When, however, Essex at her command had returned to England, the queen spared yet more troops for the assistance of Henry. But he was again foiled by the prince of Parma, and compelled to raise the siege. Parma persistently declined the battle which Henry sought, and out-generalled him in marches and counter-marches. The king's delight in the perilous ventures of war had nearly proved his ruin in this campaign ; nothing saved him but the caution of Parma, who would not believe that any man in his senses, with the responsibilities of a general in chief, *could* be risking his life so rashly. But this was Parma's last campaign. Wounded and ill, he resigned his command to Mayenne, and died before the close of the year. In respect of military operations, Spain had lost her right arm when she lost him. Mayenne secretly negotiated with Henry ; but the terms he proposed were so exorbitant that the king rejected them with contempt. Burgundy for himself, with almost regal powers ; others of the fairest provinces of France for the young duke of Guise and his friends ; all the towns in possession of the Leaguers to be held by them for six years longer ;—such were the terms on which the chief of the League proposed to sheathe the sword of civil war, terms which kindled the indignation of honest patriots, whether Romanist or Huguenot, and made many a Catholic think that France might, after all, have worse enemies than a heretic king.

Failing in these overtures, Mayenne, as lieutenant-general of the kingdom, summoned the States-general to meet at Paris in January, 1593. The country was growing so weary of anarchy that it was hoped the States would agree on the election of a Catholic king before they parted. Mayenne spoke to the deputies (as Cromwell might have done) of the woes of France, the need of a shepherd for the flock, the qualities needful for such a crisis, the duty of good citizens to forget all private interests, and rise to the greatness of their functions as

men charged with the public safety. This speech was delivered with a trembling voice to a deeply listening audience ; but when it was concluded, no Leaguer was prompt enough to act upon the hint, and move that the lieutenant-general, who so well understood both the disease of the kingdom and its remedy, should be requested himself to ascend the throne. On the contrary, six months of busy intrigues and angry declamation followed ; the Spanish ambassador especially making himself conspicuous by the zeal with which he bribed and negotiated with the deputies, and, at last, even demanded a decision in favour of the Infanta. French patriotism took fire at last ; spurned the thought of a Spanish potentate, and brought the States to declare that the crown could not lawfully be transferred to any foreign prince or princess.

The States were dissolved ; and no king had been chosen. Henry was safe for the present from a rival pretender to the throne. But how long would he be so ? since the whole course of events seemed to show that the men who swayed the public mind of France were as adverse to a Huguenot as to a foreign sovereign. This consideration had been pressing on Henry's mind for some time past. " Let him cross the dividing line between Huguenot and Catholic, and peace would come back to the distracted, desolated kingdom. A few words spoken—one form of worship left and another taken—acquiescence in a creed which had authority and prescription on its side—would give him repose after twenty years of agitation and conflict, and open for him a new career of usefulness and honour. The prospect was captivating. To a man whose religious convictions moulded his character and his life, the single step required would have been impossible. But that no such convictions had a very firm hold upon Henry's mind, is the inference to be drawn from many passages in his life. No one perhaps was ever less influenced by *fear*, yet we have seen him during the horrors of the St. Bartholomew

(when the example of his fellow-prisoner Condé might have inspired him with greater constancy) consenting to abjuration as soon as it was proposed to him. Nor could the habitual licentiousness of his conduct be associated with the faith which prepares man by self-conquest to become the conqueror of the world. When, at last, he preferred the abandonment of his creed to that of his crown, it probably appeared to him that he was rather incurring an imputation on his honour as a gentleman than inflicting a wound on his conscience."\*

Sully, who, with all his eminent qualities, sometimes sacrificed principle to expediency, admits that he was the king's tempter. "He did not say *Go to Mass: the prize is worth the cost*. He did say, I cannot *advise* that which my religion forbids; but if you will conform to the faith of the majority, all your troubles will be at an end. Otherwise you must do violence to your nature, repress opposition by severity, and be a stranger to repose, a fighting king all your days!" The deeply religious

\* The early impressions made on her son's mind by the maternal love and wisdom of Jane d'Albret were never altogether obliterated, and in so far as any distinct religious belief can be ascribed to him, he seems to have been a Protestant to the last. To D'Aubigné, who was much in his confidence, he said, before his abjuration, "I will take care that all men shall see that the theology which has converted me is just a state necessity, and nothing else." A few years afterwards (during the siege of La Fère in 1596) Henry had a severe attack of illness, and thought himself dying. D'Aubigné, who always spoke his mind with blunt honesty, was summoned to his master's side, no other person being present, and adjured by Henry to tell him faithfully whether the abjuration, made as it had been, amounted to the sin against the Holy Ghost. D'Aubigné begged leave to call in a minister, but that was refused. He was himself a religious man, and one who had studied his religion. He gave the king the best advice in his power, concluding with earnest exhortation that he would search his own heart, and repent of all that had been falsely done and spoken. The conversation lasted four hours, and several times they prayed fervently together. But on the morrow health came back; Henry was cheerful as usual; and the inquiry was never resumed.—*Vide Rev. J. H. Gurney's "Life of Henry IV."*

Huguenots, like De Mornay, would rather have chosen that he should forfeit his crown than that he should deny his faith. When it was announced that Henry had convened a number of Roman Catholic doctors and bishops to enlighten him "respecting the difficulties which had hitherto kept him estranged from their communion, that he might obtain repose and satisfaction for his conscience," De Mornay earnestly entreated him to do all in good faith. "If truth be sought after," he said, "let able disputants be provided on both sides, lest the king should lie under the imputation, incredible almost when advanced against so great a prince, who has owned God's hand so many times, of making a show of resistance while resolved to surrender." The brightest feature of this portion of Henry's life is that he took in good part the many faithful expostulations which this honest friend addressed to him.

But his resolution was taken. With the Roman Catholic divines, whom he had assembled at St. Denis, in July, 1593, he argued for a while on controverted points, with much appearance of gravity. Then, professing himself to be almost but not quite convinced, he sat patiently through several hours' conference conducted by a friendly ecclesiastic, the archbishop of Bourges.\* Two days afterwards, he made his abjuration in the church of St. Denis, and was absolved *conditionally* by the archbishop; the papal sentence of excommunication being irreversible excepting by the pontiff himself.

All the well-affected citizens of Paris received news of the king's conversion with joy, hoping that, at last, the disorders and tumults which had convulsed the kingdom for half a century would be followed by a long period of repose. They flocked to St. Denis to see him received into the Church, and shouted with transport, *long live the*

\* This last formality might have been spared, since before the conference began, Henry found time to write to his mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées, telling her that on Sunday, the next day but one, he should "*take the perilous leap.*"

*king!* Every one returned charmed with his bearing, his condescension, and that popular air which was natural to him. Yet it was not until the spring of the year following that Henry could obtain entrance into his capital, so perseveringly did Spanish emissaries intrigue for their master, and so unwilling was Mayenne to resign power as long as it was possible for him to retain a hold on it. But he had lost much of his former popularity by the manifest selfishness with which he prolonged the war to serve his own purposes, and when he quitted Paris, early in 1594, to receive a fresh body of auxiliary troops on the frontiers of Champagne, the count de Brissac, whom he had made governor of the capital, entered into secret negotiations with Henry, and opened the gates before daybreak on the 23rd March, to admit the royal forces. They entered silently, marched in battle-array through the streets, and took possession of the principal points. A single body of Spanish soldiers offered resistance, and was cut to pieces. Surprise and terror kept the seditious portion of the populace quiet. When the king entered, the governor and the provost of the city brought him the keys, and his march through Paris was a continued triumph. "Now that I am come among you," he said, "all errors are to be forgotten, and all services to be remembered." One of his soldiers in passing by a baker's shop took a loaf from the window. The king saw it, and instantly ran after him sword in hand, saying "Carry that back directly, or I will kill you;" and at once every shopkeeper in Paris dismissed his fears, brought forth his wares, and sold freely as before. At mid-day the king repaired to Notre Dame, and the crowd pressing on him so eagerly that his guards became alarmed, and began to keep the people back, "Let them come, let them come," said the good-natured monarch; "they are hungering to see a king."

He caused a general amnesty to be proclaimed immediately. The Spanish garrison quitted Paris the same day with the honours of war, and the Spanish envoys



departed with the troops. The king stood at a window to see them pass by, and said gaily, "My compliments to your master, gentlemen; but do not come back." The pope's legate was permitted to carry away with him the rector of the Jesuits and other frantic preachers of sedition and regicide. The doctors of the Sorbonne, who had insisted that Henry ought not to be acknowledged as king, even if he became a Catholic, made their submission now, and were graciously received. The parliament of Paris met, and annulled all the acts of the States-general which had been convened by the League, and every trace of the revolutionary proceedings which had taken place in Paris under the ascendancy of the Leaguers, was carefully removed. It seemed that all the difficulties which had lain in the path of the king were suddenly melting away.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

War with the Leaguers under Mayenne, and with Spain.—The Pope absolves Henry, 1595.—Submission of Mayenne.—Alliance with England and Holland against Spain.—Abuses of the Court.—The Spaniards surprise Amiens.—Peace of Vervins.—Edict of Nantes, 1598.—Domestic Administration of Henry and Sully.—Reviving Prosperity of the Kingdom.—Remaining Causes of Disorder.—Marriage of the King, 1600.—Conspiracy of Biron.—Vast Projects of Henry IV.—He prepares to attack the House of Austria, 1609.—Murder of the King, 1610; and universal grief of France.

1594 to 1610.

“PARIS,” it is commonly said, “rules France.” But it was not so in the days of Henry IV. ; and notwithstanding the submission of the capital, war continued to be carried on, more or less actively, in many parts of the kingdom. One by one, however, several important cities fell into the hands of the king ; and the chiefs of the League, perceiving that they were in danger of playing a losing game, began to treat with him. And now it was seen more plainly than ever, that baser motives had been largely mingled with their pretended zeal for the Roman Catholic religion. They were willing to acknowledge Henry IV., but on condition of receiving great dignities, the command of provinces and cities, large gifts of money. The king had determined to pacify France at any price. He therefore consented to all these demands, though, in order to do so, he was obliged to deprive long-trying faithful servants of the honours and rewards which were their due, to bestow them upon men who had scarcely ceased to be enemies. The dignities and pensions conferred upon their adversaries, the worthiest of the Huguenots could spare ; but when one governor of a city insisted that the Reformed

worship should not be set up within six leagues of his government, and another was permitted to prohibit it in all the principal towns of a large province, they might well feel that they were hardly dealt with.

The duke of Mayenne, meanwhile, continued in arms. The parliament of Paris had deposed him from his office of lieutenant-general, but he had the king of Spain for his ally, and a good body of troops under his command. He would not admit that French bishops could give any discharge from a sentence of excommunication once pronounced by the pope ; and affected still to consider Henry as a proscribed heretic, with whom no alliance or peace was possible. Clement VIII., who was now pope, had his own reasons for favouring the policy of Spain, and refused to believe in the sincerity of the king's conversion ; and Philip still talked of "*the Prince of Bearn, and the Huguenots*. I have no quarrel," he said, "with loyal Frenchmen and good Catholics, but with the heretics and their chief I war to the death." In June, 1595, a Spanish army under Mayenne and the constable of Castile was in Burgundy. Henry with a far inferior force marched rapidly to the encounter, and at Fontaine Française, with but 300 horsemen, met and repulsed the Spanish vanguard of 2,000, and risked his own life to save that of his marshal, Biron, losing but half a dozen of his own soldiers. But the fame won by this gallant skirmish poorly compensated for the loss at Dourlens, in Picardy, in the month following, when 600 gentlemen were left dead on the field, and the brave Villars was cut to pieces in cold blood, as a traitor who had turned against the League, and made his peace with the prince of heretics. Spain took Cambray, but the king won Lyons and Marseilles from the Leaguers. And thus the war went on, without a decisive advantage on either side. But it was more injurious to Henry than to Philip, for every year of warfare deepened the wounds of France: his old friends and followers became almost dispirited, and lost much of that military enthusiasm which had made them rejoice at the

sound of the battle-cry, never counting numbers when the enemies of their beloved chief were to be charged and routed ; and his new adherents were disappointed, to see the peace on which they had reckoned, still indefinitely deferred.

One element of discord was destroyed in the autumn of 1595, when Clement VIII. consented, at length, to bestow absolution on the king, moved thereto by the counsel of a Jesuit adviser, who was desirous to further the interest of his order with Henry IV. Some months before, a wretched youth, named Jean Châtel, a pupil of the Jesuits, had attempted to murder the king ; and the parliament of Paris had taken that opportunity of banishing all members of the society from France, as "corrupters of youth, disturbers of the public peace, and enemies of the king and the State." They were already soliciting a recall, and by means of the pope's compliance with Henry's wishes, hoped to further that end. Accordingly, with much pomp and in view of a vast concourse of people, Clement received to grace the ecclesiastics deputed to represent the king, struck them gently on the shoulders with a rod, as a token of chastisement, declared null and void the absolution which Henry had received from the French bishops, and named him anew king of France and Navarre. Mayenné had no further pretext for war. He made a treaty with Henry as if he had been a rival sovereign, and obtained terms only too generous for himself and his family, and the principal supporters of his ill-gotten power ; but when once his army was disbanded, and he had become a private citizen, the last rallying-point of the League was gone ; and for such an object the king grudged no sacrifices.\* To obtain it, he had even

\* Sully gives an amusing account of the meeting which followed between the king and the duke: "Mayenne having knelt to kiss the king's hand, his majesty advanced with his gay cheerful look, and raising the duke from the ground, said, as he embraced him, 'My cousin, is it really yourself, or am I dreaming?' Then taking him by the hand, he began to walk very briskly through the

consented to the demands of Clement, who required him to exclude his Huguenot friends from all public employments, and in various ways to disparage the faith which he had formerly professed.

Philip still maintained hostilities. He had possessed himself of some portions of French territory, and was averse to make peace unless he could retain them. His claim to do so Henry had rejected with deserved scorn, but in the spring of 1596, the Spaniards having taken Calais and other places, the treasury being exhausted, and the army enfeebled by the retirement of a great number of Huguenots disgusted with the concessions made at their expense to the pope, the king of France began to feel that he was over-matched. His relations with Queen Elizabeth had been scarcely friendly since his abjuration: it had excited in her deep sorrow and indignation, and she had expressed these feelings to him frankly enough. The enmity which Spain bore to both sovereigns made them, however, natural allies, and Elizabeth often gave the assistance which Henry craved, though rather from policy than affection. But now the French king begged for an alliance both offensive and defensive, and after some hesitation the queen gave way. The object of the treaty was to withstand the aggressions of Spain for the common safety; and the two sovereigns pledged themselves to each other not to make a separate peace or truce with the king of Spain, or any of his officers. Four

park, pointing out the walks and drives, describing his intended improvements, and dwelling on all that was convenient and beautiful in the arrangements of the house. My lord of Mayenne, who was suffering from sciatica, kept up with him as well as he could, but still he lagged behind, his enfeebled limb dragging heavily after him. Seeing this, the king whispered in my ear, 'If I walk this fat gentleman here much longer, I shall have revenge for all my wrongs easily enough; for he will certainly fall down dead.' Then, having got a confession from Mayenne that he could hold out no longer, he laid his hand on the duke's shoulder, and said, laughing, 'Take my word for it, cousin, I will never do anything worse to injure or displease you.'"

thousand troops were immediately sent from England to the defence of Picardy and Normandy. A similar treaty was shortly afterwards negotiated with the Dutch.

Never had foreign succours been more needed, for the war was pressing with almost intolerable severity on the people of France. The enormous bribes and pensions which the chiefs of the League had exacted as the price of their loyalty, had exhausted the resources which should have served to maintain armies for the defence of the State. There was great scarcity that year at Paris, throngs of poor people crying for bread blocked up the streets, and meanwhile, the court and nobility were almost exceeding all previous extravagance, in their profuse luxury and magnificence of dress and entertainments. And, sad to say, the king's own habits gave countenance to the worst excesses of the nobles. He was living in undisguised adultery with the best-loved of his mistresses, Gabrielle d'Estrées. She had always the place of honour by his side, and her son was ranked among the peers of France. "Henry's favourite place of revels was the house of a low-born Italian, named Zamet, who had begun by being valet of the wardrobe to Henry III., and afterwards, under the League and Mayenne, had risen to be a financial agent, trafficking in money matters with princes, whose poverty made them sue for loans, till he had become the richest subject ever known in France. Among the guests of ill-repute who thronged his spacious mansion, and amidst scenes from which modesty and decency were banished, the king sought his recreation, and forgot his dignity; while grave men wondered to see the hero of Coutras and Ivry thus enslaved, and asked how one who had fought twenty battles for a creed could thus outrage common morality!"

Pestilence was added to the other troubles of the time. The air of Paris being thus infected, Henry convened an assembly of Notables at Rouen, for it was absolutely necessary to devise some means of providing money to supply the necessities of the army. He addressed them



in a speech which stirred the patriotism of his hearers. "If I coveted the fame of an orator," he said, "I should have prepared a long and eloquent discourse, to be recited to you with all becoming gravity. But my ambition is to win a title of more glorious meaning, and to be called the liberator and restorer of this kingdom ; and for this end I have summoned you hither. You know to your cost, as I have known to mine, that when God called me to the crown I found France on the brink of ruin, and well-nigh lost to Frenchmen. By the divine favour, in the first place, and by the prayers and counsels of those among my subjects who do not carry arms, by the good swords of my valiant nobles, and I may add, on the faith of a gentleman, by my own pains and toil, I have saved it from dismemberment ; let us now save it, if we can, from ruin. Share the glory of this second enterprise with me, my dear subjects, as you shared the glory of the first. I have not summoned you for the same purpose as the kings, my predecessors. They required only your assent to their decrees ; I have brought you together to ask your advice, and to follow it ; to place myself, in short, under your guidance. No common purpose this for kings, and grey-beards, and conquerors : but the love I bear to my people makes all things easy and honourable to me."

This address, delivered with the frank yet dignified demeanour which seemed natural to Henry IV., made the members of the assembly believe that they had the power, as well as the will, to effect useful reforms in the management of the national resources. They began by asking permission to nominate a council who should have some independent control over the finances. But although Henry desired the prosperity of his kingdom, he was not disposed to any real abatement of his prerogative ; and some of his ministers who had received large grants out of the public money, and were afraid that the council of the Notables might call on them to refund, represented the proposal of the assembly as a gross infringement of the king's rights. Sully had nothing to fear on his own



account ; but he did not desire that any power should pass from the king's hands to those of the people, and he was pleased to frustrate the design of the Notables, at the same time that he seemed to assent to it. The king had already appointed him to control the Exchequer, that he might check the frauds of the revenue officers. He advised his master privately to permit the assembly to nominate the council as they desired ; " Let them have their way," said he ; " they will dispute and settle nothing. They will propose unpopular taxes and soon become odious. Men will curse them for their folly, and give you their blessing. The people's voice in matters of government will be held in contempt, and your subjects will be more loyal to the crown than ever." So it came to pass. The council began its labours. But in estimating the revenue, and apportioning it between the king and the public service, they wanted guidance, and could obtain none. They prayed Sully to come and help them once a week. " The king ordered me to go," he says, but I took care they should learn nothing from me, being glad enough that they should make my words good." Thus weeks were consumed in vain. The task was quite beyond the powers of these well-meaning but inexperienced reformers, and they came at length humbly to the king, laid before him all the story of their difficulties and their failure, and ended with a request that he would take the whole business into his own hands, " as he knew better how to manage the kingdom than all his subjects put together."

The winter had worn away in these abortive deliberations. In the spring of 1598, the court being in the midst of a round of dissipation, drunk with pleasure and revelry, a sudden thunder-clap startled the king and all Paris. The Spaniards had taken Amiens by surprise, in broad day, and the standard of king Philip was floating almost within twenty leagues of Paris ! In the first shame and terror of the disaster, the citizens doubted whether their capital itself were safe. But the king flew to arms

now. Sully helped him to gather fresh taxes, an army was levied, and after five months' siege, the Spanish garrison which had possession of Amiens capitulated.

This was almost the last event of the long war. Philip II., at 70 years of age, after shedding blood like water on the scaffold and in the field, and warring with half Europe, during a reign of more than forty years, was descending to the tomb, and willing at last to make peace, only not with heretics. With France he would enter into a treaty; towards England and Holland his enmity was as bitter as ever. But to England and Holland Henry was bound by pledges as solemn as a king could give; pledges, too, which for his own purposes, himself had proposed and urged, not two years before, never to treat with Spain apart from both or either of them. Fidelity to his engagements pointed one way, self-interest another; and his pledges and promises were given to the winds. He made peace for himself, and gave nothing but fair words to the allies who had helped him in his extremest need. Elizabeth was greatly wounded and incensed; and wrote him word that "if there was such a thing as sin against the Holy Ghost in temporal concerns, doubtless that sin was ingratitude: if he had obtained good terms from Spain, he must thank England for them; and solemn oaths and mutual compacts were never intended for snares, unless by the worst of men."

The treaty with Spain was entitled the Peace of *Vervins*, from the place at which it was signed. By it, Philip renounced all his conquests in French territory excepting Cambray. One of the results of the peace was so happy, that it went far to efface all remembrance of blame attached to the negotiations. Freed from the cares of war, Henry was free at last to protect the rights of his Protestant subjects; and in the same year in which he concluded the treaty of Vervins (1598), he passed the Edict of Nantes.

This famous edict commenced by an acknowledgment

that God was worshipped and adored by all the French people, if not in the same forms, yet with the same intention. It was then declared to be "a perpetual and irrevocable law, the chief foundation of the union and tranquillity of the State—1st. That all men should enjoy in private full liberty of conscience. 2nd. That the free public celebration of the Protestant worship should in all future times be permitted in every place, in which it had actually been celebrated immediately before the date of that edict. 3rd. That all superior lords might hold meetings for public worship within the limits of their castles and country seats; and that every inferior gentleman might receive thirty visitors at his domestic worship. 4th. That the Protestants might participate in all the benefits of public employments, schools, hospitals, and charities. 5th. That they should possess five academies for the education of youth. 6th. That they might convene and hold national synods. Besides these concessions, they were to occupy several fortified towns as a security for the observance of them; and to insure the due execution of justice, mixed courts of Catholic and Protestant judges were to be appointed, before which suitors might come when they distrusted the ordinary tribunals. (These courts were entitled "*Chambers of the Edict.*") Henry was surrounded now by men in whose eyes toleration was treason against the Church, and great was the opposition made before this edict was suffered to become law. The clergy petitioned; the parliament of Paris remonstrated, and the pope's legate seconded them with all his influence. But the king's mind was made up. "I pray you to confirm the edict," he said to the Parliament. "I have made peace abroad, and I mean to make peace at home. My will is reason enough for you, and where subjects are loyal, princes need give no other. I am king now, and speak as a king, and mean to be obeyed." And obeyed he was; for besides being king he had the resources of a kingdom at his command, and the magistrates went

straight from the palace to their hall, and registered the edict as they had been bidden to do.

And now all domestic and foreign wars were ended, with the exception of a brief campaign against Savoy, which we shall have to notice presently. Twelve years yet remained to Henry IV., in which to promote the peace and prosperity of his country. This end he in a great degree accomplished, with the aid of some excellent public servants, but above all of Sully. Not only were the wounds of France healed, but she was raised to a higher degree of power than she had ever before attained ; so great are the natural resources of the country, and so abundant their development under the guidance of a wise and vigilant ruler.

At the accession of Henry IV. the public revenues had for many years been a prey to robbers : and when Sully undertook the management of the finances, he discovered that out of 170 millions of livres yearly raised for the service of the State, not more than 30 millions found their way to the treasury, so great and numerous were the frauds of the collectors of the revenue and their subordinates.\* With these plunderers the minister waged unceasing war : and at first was literally obliged to wield the sword as well as the pen in support of his economical reforms ; some titled upholders of the abuses which enriched them choosing rather to challenge the superintendent of the finances to single combat, than to resign their ill-gotten gains at his bidding. The results

\* The misappropriation of the national revenue was notorious. One of the many anecdotes recorded of Henry's wayside conversations with the peasants (whom he delighted to talk with, in the character of a chance traveller), tells us that the king, hearing a vine-dresser boast that he could earn twenty pence a day, asked him how he spent them. "Why I divide it," answered the vine-dresser, "into four parts ; thus, and thus, and thus, I spend three of them ; and then for the remaining fourth, I throw it into the sea." "What do you mean by that ?" said the king. "O what I mean, is that the last portion is for my king, but as he gets very little of it—almost none—it is the same thing as if I threw it away."

of his administration may be summed up as follows: He had found the revenue overwhelmed with debt; he left it unencumbered; besides amassing a vast treasure for the defence of the nation, or for foreign conquest. At the same time he reduced the taxes. He recovered for the Crown estates of very great value, which had been improvidently alienated from it. He found the royal palaces in decay; he restored them to splendour. He found the fortresses of the kingdom dilapidated; he renewed their strength and increased their number. Churches, schools, hospitals, arose on every side. The highways and bridges were repaired. The Pont Neuf, the Hôtel de Ville, several of the principal streets and edifices of Paris, were constructed or embellished by the care of the king and the wise thrift of his minister. The arsenals were filled with stores of war. A vast system of internal navigation was in progress for connecting the Seine with the Loire, the Loire with the Saône, and the Saône with the Meuse.

The iron age of war and famine and fiscal oppression had passed away. Every man planted in quiet, and reaped in safety. The artisan received the hire of his labour. The merchant gathered in the profits of his capital. The cultivators of the soil were freed from many of the worst tyrannies of the lords, the soldiery, and the tax-gatherers. But neither Henry IV. nor his great minister bestowed on France any security against the recurrence of the abuses which they had arrested. In later times, indeed at no great distance of time, these abuses reappeared, substantially the same.

In some particulars the king and Sully were not altogether of the same mind. Henry wished to encourage the manufacture of costly and elegant productions; tapestry, the richest brocades, &c. He planted a great number of mulberry-trees in the south, and gave such an impulse to the silk manufacture, that the looms of Lyons soon acquired a celebrity they have never since lost. About the same time fine mirrors, glasses of various kinds,



and several other articles which France had hitherto imported, began to be made at home. But Sully by no means favoured the rapid growth of manufacturing industry. He would gladly have discountenanced all luxury in dress, all excessive ornamentation of buildings, and everything which tended to introduce, as he thought, soft, effeminate habits of life. He desired an agricultural, not a manufacturing population, believing that rural labour reared up a healthy, hardy race to serve the State, either in peace or war ; and that the ploughed lands and the pastures were (as he used to phrase it) the breasts by which France was nourished, the veritable mines and treasures of Peru.

Notwithstanding all these evidences of reviving prosperity and national contentment, two threatening causes of disorder and mischief remained. One was the ambition entertained by many of the principal nobles, both those who had been the king's enemies and those who had fought on his side. During the long civil wars they had strengthened their own power enormously at the expense of the Crown, and the vigour with which Henry asserted his supreme authority, and repressed their encroachments, provoked their resentment and discontent. It was plain that if ever the opportunity were given them, they would not spare to divide France into so many petty sovereignties, united by very slight bonds of obedience or loyalty to the throne.

The other source of evil was to be found in the king's own dissolute habits of life. Often during the war he had sacrificed the advantages won by his valour and promptitude, to forget himself and his cause amidst the seductions of illicit pleasure. And now the peace of his reign was disturbed by the same besetting evils ; which offered a pretext for revolt to the discontented lords, at the same time that they debased his character and embittered his latter years. Between himself and his wife, Margaret of Valois, there had never been any affection, and Margaret's conduct was as open to censure as her husband's. But



careless as she was of purity and good fame, she had some sense of her position as a princess of France. Henry wished to be divorced: Margaret had no objection, yet refused her consent while Gabrielle d'Estrées lived, because the king would have raised his mistress to the throne.

But Gabrielle dying in 1599, both the queen and the king's ministers seconded his desire for a separation. In the following year the court of Rome granted a divorce. Sully, in the hope that a second union might reform the king's habits, as well as bring heirs to the throne in the direct line, promoted a treaty of marriage with Mary de Medicis, a niece of the grand-duke of Tuscany. Henry, however, showed no manner of impatience to welcome his new bride; eight months were suffered to elapse before he set out to receive the lady at Lyons. After grieving passionately for the death of Gabrielle during a fortnight, he had chosen another mistress, Henrietta d'Entragues, and had carried his infatuation so far as to give her a written promise of marriage. He showed the paper to Sully, who had the honest boldness to tear it in pieces before his master's face. But the king immediately returned to his cabinet, and wrote another, which he remitted to his unworthy favourite, creating her at the same time marchioness of Verneuil.

Yet he suffered his ministers to conclude the contract for his marriage with Mary. The Italian princess brought with her a great dowry, but she had unhappily neither wit nor beauty sufficient to win much attention from her husband. Surrounded with the mere empty state of royalty, the new queen met with vexations and contradictions at every turn, which soured her temper, and induced her to lavish all her confidence and regard on her Italian attendants, especially her foster-sister, Eleanor Galigai, who, with her husband Concini, both persons of obscure birth, became the heads of a small but powerful faction in the court. Repressed during the lifetime of the king, this party exercised a most mischievous influence in the reign of his successor.

The marchioness of Verneuil and her friends had their faction likewise, in which the leaders were the count d'Auvergne, a half-brother of the marchioness, and illegitimate son of Charles IX., and Biron, son of the famous marshal of that name, and himself one of the most renowned generals of the time. The king had loaded him with honours and wealth, and made him, at thirty-three years of age, both marshal of France and governor of Burgundy; but nothing short of sovereign power could satisfy the ambition of Biron. Charles Emanuel, duke of Savoy, and the count of Fuentes, Spanish governor of Milan, formed a plot with Biron against the king. They promised him, amongst other rewards, the possession of Burgundy as an independent principality; and Biron undertook to rally all the discontented lords in France against Henry. The duke of Savoy was emboldened by this promise to encroach on the French territory. Henry immediately went to war with him, and little suspecting Biron's treason, gave him the command of the army destined to act against Savoy. Biron did all he could to be beaten; he constantly gave secret information to the enemy of his projected movements, but nevertheless he was forced to conquer in spite of himself. The French forces invariably got the better of their adversaries; defeated them in action, and took their fortresses. Savoy sued for peace, and was glad to obtain it by ceding the districts of Bresse, Bugey, and the banks of the Rhone as far as Lyons.

A fresh conspiracy was set on foot within a year or two, in which the pretensions of Henrietta d'Entragues occupied a very conspicuous place. A son had been born to the king and queen, who became afterwards Louis XIII. But Henrietta now boldly brought forward the king's promise to marry *her*, and claimed the right of succession for the sons whom she had borne to him. Biron, the count d'Auvergne, and many other lords espoused her cause, and plotted to declare the king's marriage invalid, and the Dauphin illegitimate. Biron opened

negotiations again with the duke of Savoy and the Spaniard Fuentes ; and believed himself in full security, confident that the favour which the king entertained for him was so great that he would never be even suspected, until his plot was ripe for execution. The king, on the contrary, received early information through Biron's own secretary, who betrayed his master out of fear for himself. But Henry was so unwilling to give up the favourite whom he had distinguished above most of his other servants, and who had received no less than thirty-three wounds in his cause, that he tried every possible means of inducing Biron to confess his treason, and freely open his heart to him, before he would make known his crime, and suffer the law to take its course against him. Biron denied everything, until he discovered, too late, that everything was already known to his too indulgent master. Then he appealed to the king's clemency, and to the memory of his past services, but in vain. Treasons repeated and persisted in could no longer be overlooked. Biron was executed : Auvergne, less guilty, had his sentence commuted to imprisonment. Other malcontents saved themselves by flight. The just doom which had overtaken Biron intimidated them, but did not altogether put a stop to their ambitious hopes and plottings. Once more the count d'Entragues, Henrietta's father, conspired to place her son on the throne, aided by some of the chief men in the kingdom ; d'Epernon, Montmorency, the king's old friend, the duke de Bouillon, and others ; and reckoning on the support of a Spanish army under Spinola, and on that of the duke of Savoy. But this plot also was discovered. The father and brother of Henrietta were condemned to death, but spared for her sake : "the lady herself was successively condemned to banishment from the court, and to imprisonment for life ; but was subsequently pardoned and restored to favour. Restless, faithless, shameless, covetous of wealth and power, she yet kept the king more or less her slave almost to the last year of his life."

The king of Spain sedulously disavowed participation in the intrigues of his officers and ministers ; but Henry gave him little credit for sincerity. The two kingdoms had been nominally at peace since the treaty of Vervins, but all the malcontents in France looked to Spain for help. On the other hand, the abasement of the house of Austria, both in its Spanish and German branches, was the favourite subject of Henry's meditations. With this were connected vast schemes for the redistribution of Europe, and the establishment of a balance of power between the various states and sovereigns. In these he desired the sympathy and concurrence of Queen Elizabeth, his firmest ally, notwithstanding all causes of difference which had arisen between them.

In 1601, Henry was at Calais. Elizabeth pressed him to cross the Strait, and, to facilitate a personal interview, herself journeyed as far as Dover. Henry, however, could not visit England, but deputed Sully to represent him. Sully, who was fully acquainted with his master's plans, found, he says, the queen well disposed warmly to approve and second them ; incredible as it appears that either of those sagacious monarchs could have hoped to realize designs, involving difficulties such as no sovereign had ever surmounted before, and affecting so many conflicting interests, national and religious.

That Sweden and Denmark should unite with France, England, and Scotland, to secure the independence of the Low Countries, by joining the Dutch and Belgian provinces together in one powerful republic ; that Switzerland should be similarly enlarged and strengthened by the addition of Alsace, Franche Comté, and the Tyrol ; that the great empire of the house of Austria should be broken up into three distinct monarchies, Hungary, Bohemia, and Germany, and all elective ; that Italy should be apportioned between Italian powers ; Spain retaining nothing in Europe beyond her own proper boundaries ; and that the established religions of Europe should be reduced into three, which should appear the

most numerous and considerable,—such is a brief outline of some of the most important features of a design, which reads rather like a political romance than a scheme seriously conceived and entertained by experienced sovereigns and statesmen.

The long life and reign of Elizabeth were drawing to a close. Two years after these conferences with Sully, she died. Her feeble successor, James, was flattered by Henry's desire to insure his friendship and co-operation, but was far too anxious to stand well with Spain to act steadily in concert with France.

In the spring of 1609, an event apparently of trifling importance gave Henry the opportunity he was seeking of fastening a quarrel on Austria. The duke of Cleves and Juliers died, and there were many claimants for the succession. The emperor (Rodolph II.) undertook to decide between them. The Protestant princes of the empire refused to accept him as arbitrator, and formed a league for mutual defence, called the Evangelic Union. Henry joined alliance with them; with the Dutch also, who thought their own recently conquered independence might be somewhat endangered by the appointment of a Roman Catholic as sovereign of the duchies; and with the duke of Savoy, the petty Italian sovereigns, and the Grisons. The king of Spain became alarmed for the safety of his Italian and Flemish territories, and made fresh overtures of peace and friendship with France, which Henry rejected. But Henry's declaration of war against Spain and Austria was complicated with some circumstances which attached great reproach and dishonour to it.

He had lately given in marriage to the young prince of Condé Charlotte de Montmorency, a beautiful girl of sixteen; and now, at fifty-six years of age, fell passionately in love with her himself. Condé indignantly carried off his wife to Brussels, and placed her under the protection of the archduchess, the wife of the governor of Flanders. The governor was so fearful of provoking Henry's resent-



ment that he would not receive Condé himself, but prayed him to seek an asylum in Lombardy rather. Henry, however, was quite sufficiently indignant that the princess should be sheltered from his pursuit. Brussels lay in his way to Cleves. He declared that he would first reclaim the fugitive, and then pass on to the help of his allies. His military preparations were hastened forward, and by the month of May, 1610, everything was ready for the opening of the campaign. With a fine army, prosperous finances, and numerous allies, he exulted in the thought of giving the law to Europe, and raising France to that preponderating influence which for the last century had been enjoyed by the house of Austria. Yet with all his sanguine anticipations, Henry was ill at ease. It could hardly be otherwise. One who had passed much of his early life in contending for a just cause, with brave and virtuous men by his side, could not fail to be painfully sensible, at least sometimes, of the contrast between his former and his present associations. Of his old friends very few besides Sully remained near him. Some were dead; others were in little favour, absenting themselves from a court in which they found much to condemn. And some whom he had distinguished with peculiar regard had repaid him with ingratitude and rebellion. Profligate courtiers, male and female, were now among his familiar companions; and instead of battles fought and won in an honest cause, there were the perpetual, miserable broils in the palace between his arrogant mistress and his insulted queen. He loved his country too, and foreboding all too justly that many evils would come upon France when he was removed, and that his removal by a premature and violent death was by no means unlikely, he would sometimes sorrowfully say to those about him, "When I am gone, you will know my value."

During the approaching campaign, he intended the queen to act as regent, and yielding to her wishes, caused her first to be publicly crowned, a ceremony which had hitherto been neglected. But he had a strange presenti-



ment of evil regarding this coronation, and said more than once to Sully, "It will be the death of me. I shall never get out of this city again; they will murder me, for they have no way to escape out of danger but by my death." The day fixed for the ceremony, however, the 13th May, came and went without mischief; but also with little show of popular rejoicing, for the coming war was far from agreeable to the people generally. On the following day, the king's mind was oppressed with deeper gloom than ever, so that he could neither occupy nor amuse himself, but wandered restlessly up and down. In the afternoon, he ordered his carriage that he might go to the Arsenal, to see Sully, who was ill. The duke d'Epernon and some other noblemen were with him; but he had no guards, only a few attendants, some on foot and others on horseback, behind his carriage. An obstruction in the street obliged the driver to stop for a few moments. At that instant, a wretch, named Ravailac, (who had been watching his opportunity for several days,) mounted on one of the wheels, and stabbed the king between the ribs. "I am wounded," cried Henry; but the assassin, repeating the blow immediately, pierced his heart, and the king expired without uttering another word.

Ravailac made no attempt to escape, glorying in his crime, which had been suggested to him, he said, in dreams and visions which were like the voice of Heaven. He had listened, as former assassins had done, to teachers who inculcated the duty of even killing kings in the Church's quarrel, and exalted regicides into martyrs. But although the emperor, the king of Spain, the queen of France, the duke d'Epernon, the Jesuits, were all in turn suspected of complicity in this atrocious murder, because all derived some advantage from the king's death, Ravailac resolutely denied that he had any accomplices. "He had often," he said, "attempted to gain access to the king's presence in order to urge on him the duty of *compelling* the Huguenots to be reconciled

to the Church ; but latterly, *hearing that the king was going to war against the pope,*" and believing that he was still a Huguenot at heart, he had determined to kill him. So confident was the wretched man in the justice of his cause, that he manifested great amazement when the people rushed forward themselves to assist in the horrible process of his execution.\*

Never did the death of a king cause more universal sorrow. All France mourned together ; trade and labour were almost entirely suspended both in town and country. "We have lost our father !" was the sorrowful cry which burst from every mouth. Henry deserved to be loved ; for well as he loved power, he had far more sympathy with his fellow-men, and took far more interest in the well-being of all classes of his subjects, high or low, rich or poor, than any king whom France had seen since the days of St. Louis, Louis XII. only excepted. Generations yet to come would look back with fond remembrance and regret to the days of Henry IV. These humane and generous qualities were unhappily hindered of their due exercise by the vices too flagrantly evident in Henry's court and life. While the king's benevolent wish "that he might live to see the day when every peasant in France would have a fowl in the pot for his Sunday dinner," was repeated gratefully in a thousand cottages, his own extravagance was helping to make the peasant's meal scanty and his cottage bare. He neither resigned his lawless indulgences, nor curtailed the lavish expenses of his palace, that the taxes which pressed heavily on the sons of toil might be lowered. While Sully was carefully economizing the revenue, Henry would send for 100,000 *livres* in a single day to pay his gambling debts. His rapacious mistresses and worthless courtiers obtained licenses and monopolies which restricted trade, and made commodities dear. One day, Sully set out for the palace

\* The French law condemned regicides to have the right hand cut off ; the flesh of their bodies torn with red-hot pincers, scalding oil, rosin, &c., being poured into the wounds ; and finally, to be fastened to four horses and rent asunder.

with a whole bundle of these royal licenses in his hand, intending to remonstrate with his master, and get them revoked if possible. By the way, he met the marchioness of Verneuil, who being of a prying disposition, inquired curiously into his business with the king. "Why here is your name, among the rest," said plain-spoken Sully, reading out the list. "And what should the king do with his favours," replied the lady unabashed, "if he does not bestow them on his friends and his mistress?" "But the money is not the king's own to give," returned Sully; it comes out of the pockets of his subjects, merchants, artisans, labourers. New and burdensome imposts of this sort cannot be permitted."

Henry would not always be guided by Sully's advice, but he knew how to value him. Gabrielle d'Estrées was complaining vehemently one day of the austere frugal minister; "Madam," said the king, "I would sooner consent to lose ten mistresses like yourself than one servant like Sully." On one occasion only, when a great number of persons, whose former gains at the public expense had been abolished by Sully, laid complaints against him, and conspired to ruin him in his master's opinion, the king seemed somewhat shaken. But his natural frankness and cordiality soon prevailed. He acquainted his minister with the complaints he had received and the suspicions which their authors had raised against his loyalty, but assured him of his continued confidence and affection. Sully, much moved, knelt down and expressed his gratitude and reverence, but the king raised him instantly; "What are you about?" he said, "people will think I am forgiving you for some fault," pointing to a group of courtiers in the distance. Then advancing towards them, he said, "Gentlemen, take notice all of you that I love Rosny\* better than ever, and that we are firm friends for life or for death."

On the fatal 14th May, Sully was at the Arsenal, waiting his master's arrival, when a gentleman of his

\* Sully long went by this name, which was that of his birth-place, and the lands originally belonging to his family.

suite rushed in, exclaiming that the king was dangerously wounded. "My God!" cried Sully, "have pity on him! Have pity on us,—on this realm! France will fall into strange hands if he is taken." Another messenger quickly came with tidings of the king's death. Henry was fifty-seven years of age. He had reigned twenty-one years from the death of Henry III., seventeen years from the time of his abjuration, when he was first generally acknowledged king by all parties within the realm.

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## NOTES.

The duchy of Vendôme, and the vast inheritance of the house of Albret, comprising Lower Navarre, Foix, Béarn, and Bigorre, Périgord, and Limousin, had been united to the crown of France by the accession of Henry IV.

There still existed within the limits of France, three small independent principalities: viz. that of Sedan, belonging to the old feudal house of La Tour; the Comtat Venaissin, which belonged to the pope, and the principality of Orange, belonging to the house of Nassau.

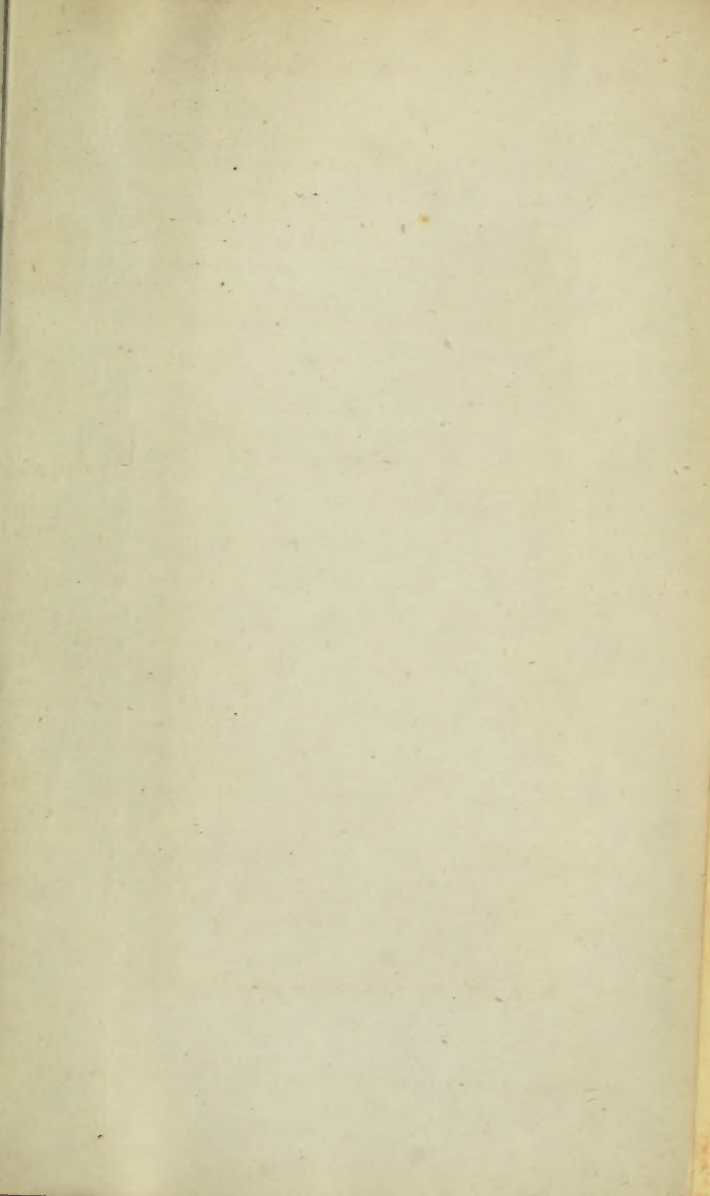
The remainder of France was divided into twelve governments, viz.:—Picardy, Normandy, Isle of France, Champagne and Brie, Orléanais, Burgundy, Brittany, Lyonnais, Guienne, Languedoc, Dauphiné, Provence.

Henry IV. had encouraged a gentleman of Saintonge (named *Champlain*, to make discoveries, and found settlements in North America. Port Royal (now called *Annapolis*) was founded by Champlain in 1604, and Quebec in 1608.

The disturbed times of the religious wars had not been favourable to the cultivation of letters; nevertheless, one of the greatest of the old French writers, *Montaigne*, had produced his *Essays*. In poetry, *Malherbe* and *Regnier* were leading the way for the labours of more famous authors.

"The heroic potter," Bernard Palissy, had lived and laboured through most of the sixteenth century.

END OF VOL. I.







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